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## HANS ANDERSEN'S BEST STORIES

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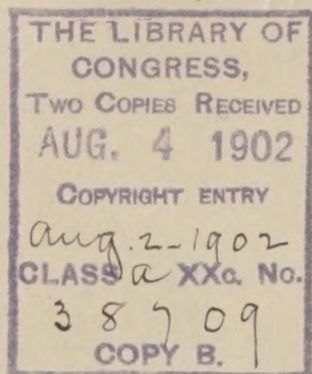
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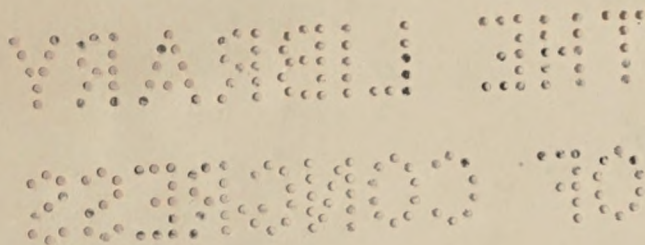


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# HANS ANDERSEN'S BEST STORIES

## ABOUT HANS ANDERSEN

A LITTLE over a hundred years ago there lived in the kingdom of Denmark a little boy named Hans Christian Andersen. His father was a poor shoemaker, and had to work very hard for a living, but he managed to find a great deal of time to read, even though he was so poor and books were so very hard to get.

Hans' parents lived in only one room in the garret of a six-story house, and nearly all of the furniture in this poor little room was made by the shoemaker himself. The walls, however, were covered with pictures, and over the workbench was a cupboard full of books. By means of a ladder it was possible to go out on the roof, and there, in the gutters between it and the neighbor's roof, stood a box filled with soil, where vegetables and flowers grew. It was exactly like the box that Andersen tells us about in his story of the Snow Queen.

Hans' mother kept the little room clean and



bright. It was her delight that her curtains and bedspread should be as white as snow, and that the metal plates and pans which hung upon the walls should shine like mirrors. She was not, like her husband, fond of books, but her son says that she had a "heart full of love."

Hans was the only child, and his parents did everything they could to make him happy. While his father worked he told his little son the most delightful stories.

Although his parents were so poor, he had not the least idea of what it was to be in want. There was more than enough for his needs. An old woman altered his father's clothes for him. His mother would fasten three or four large pieces of silk with pins on his breast, and that had to do for vests. A large kerchief was tied round his neck with a mighty bow, and when his head was washed with soap and his hair was curled he was in all his glory. Hans' mother used to tell him that he was brought up like a nobleman's son. She, as a child, had been driven out by her parents to beg.

When Hans was about nine years old his father died. Then his poor mother had to go out washing, and Hans was sent to work in a cloth factory.

He had a very beautiful voice, and the people in the factory used to love to hear him sing. It is



said that when he sang all the looms stood still and he had to sing again and again.

But not long afterward his mother married again, and Hans went to school for a while. His mother wanted him to be a tailor, but Hans did not care for that. Like his father, he loved reading and books. He wanted to go to Copenhagen, where he thought he would have a better chance to study.

Hans' mother would not consent to this, until one day an old fortune-teller told her that her son would become a great man if she would only give him the chance. You know fortune-tellers pretend that they can tell what is going to happen. Hans' mother believed in them, so when Hans was about fourteen years old she packed up his clothes in a small bundle, gave him a little money, and paid the driver of a stage-coach to carry the lad to the sea side, where he could take the ship for Copenhagen.

In that city Hans had a very hard time for a while. He tried first one thing and then another, but did not succeed in anything. Soon his money was all gone, and he was almost in despair—but he did not give up hope. He was a boy who thought of the right thing at the right time. He remembered that people had praised his singing, and reading one day in the newspapers about a great singing-master in the city, he determined to apply to him.



The singing-master was a very kind-hearted man. He saw that Hans had a good voice, and so he took the lad into his own home and treated him almost like a son, giving him food, lodging, and lessons for nothing. He lived here for some time and was doing well, when he took a bad cold and lost his voice. Then his troubles began all over again.

By this time, however, Hans had made a great many friends. There was one in particular, an officer of state, who told the king how bright Hans was, and persuaded him to send the boy to a grammar school to be educated. Hans worked very hard, and pleased everybody who had taken an interest in him. After a time, the king sent him all over Europe, and when he came back he wrote many books that the people of Denmark were very proud of. Soon he became the best known man in Denmark, and was loved next to the king.

Hans Andersen was always very fond of children; and while he wrote many books for grown people, those he wrote for his little friends are thought the best. He believed that he owed his success in life to the stories his father had told him, because they made him think and gave him something to talk about. In writing these tales he hoped that they might do as much for other boys as they had done for him.



# THE SNOW QUEEN

## THE FIRST STORY,

WHICH TREATS OF A MIRROR AND ITS BROKEN PIECES

What I am going to tell you is all about a wicked goblin; indeed he was the very worst of goblins—a real demon.

One day this demon was in the best kind of humor, because he had made a magic mirror. When good and beautiful things were reflected in this mirror they looked bad and ugly; while all that was bad and ugly appeared much worse than it really was.

The most beautiful landscapes looked like boiled spinach, and people became really frightful. Their faces were so distorted that no one would have known them, and a single freckle on a face seemed to spread over the whole nose and mouth. When a good or kind thought passed through a person's mind, it looked so queer and funny in the mirror that the demon chuckled with glee at his fine invention.

The demon kept a school for goblins, and all those who went to it ran about the country telling



people that at last one could see what the things in this world really looked like. They went everywhere with the mirror, till at last there was not a country or a human being that had not been reflected and distorted in it.

They even wanted to fly up to heaven to mock the angels, and they tried to do so. Higher and higher they flew, almost up to heaven; then the mirror began to shake so hard that it fell from their hands to the earth, where it broke into millions and billions of pieces.

But now the mirror caused more unhappiness than ever before, for some pieces were hardly as big as a grain of sand, and these flew about all over the world. When they got into people's eyes they stuck there and made everything look wrong, for every piece had the same power as the whole mirror.

Some people even got small pieces in their hearts, and this was the most terrible of all, for then their hearts became like lumps of ice.

Small pieces of the mirror kept on flying through the air, and now you shall hear what happened on account of one of them.



## THE SECOND STORY

## A LITTLE BOY AND A LITTLE GIRL

In a great town where there are many houses and people there is not room for every one to have a little garden, and most people must be content with a few flowers in pots.

But once there were two poor children who lived in a large town and who had a garden much bigger than a flower pot. They were not brother and sister, but they were just as fond of each other as if they had been. Their parents lived opposite each other in two garrets where the roofs joined. In each garret there was a window that opened on the roof, and you had only to step across the gutter to get from one window to the other.

Right across the gutter the parents had placed two wooden boxes so that they almost reached from one window to the other. In these boxes they grew kitchen herbs. In each box was a rose-bush; and there were some sweet peas, too, which hung down over the sides of the boxes. The rose-bushes shot up long branches, which twined themselves round the windows, making them look like bowers.

The boxes were very high, and the children knew they must not climb upon them; but they often had



permission to step outside and sit on their little stools under the rose-bushes, and there they often played happily together.

In winter these pleasant hours came to an end. The windows were often frozen over, but then the children heated copper pennies on the stove and placed the warm coins against the frozen panes. This made little round peep-holes, through which gleamed bright eyes—those of the little girl and boy.

The little boy was called Kay, and the little girl Gerda.

In the summer time they could get to each other with one jump; but in the winter they had first to go down one long staircase and up another.

When the snow was falling the old grandmother would say, “The white bees are swarming.”

“Have they a queen-bee, too?” asked the little boy, for he knew that there was always a queen among the real bees.

“Indeed they have,” said the old grandmother. “She always flies where the swarm is thickest. She is the largest of them all and never settles on the ground, but flies up to the black clouds again. Many a winter night does she fly through the streets of the town, looking in through the windows, and then the frost on the panes becomes most wonderful and looks like flowers.”



“Yes, I have seen that,” said both the children, and then they knew it was true.

In the evening, when little Kay was at home and half undressed, he climbed up on the chairs by the window and looked out through the little round hole. He could see the snowflakes falling outside, and one of them, the largest of all, settled on the edge of one of the flower-boxes. The snowflake grew larger and larger, till at last it became a woman, dressed in the most delicate white gauze, which looked as if it were made of millions of starry flakes. She was very, very beautiful, but made of ice—dazzling, glittering ice. Still, she was alive, and her eyes sparkled like two bright stars. She nodded toward the window and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened and jumped down from the chair, and just then it seemed as if a large bird flew past the window.

Next day it was clear, frosty weather, and then came the thaw, and at last the spring. The sun shone; the green leaves burst forth; the swallows built their nests; the windows were opened, and the two little children again sat in their little garden, high up over the gutter on the roof.

The roses blossomed beautifully that summer. The little girl had learned a hymn in which there was something about roses, and that made her think



of her own roses; and so she sang it to the little boy, who joined in, and together they sang:

“The roses grow in the valley,  
Where the Christ-Child we shall see.”

And the little ones held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, and looked up at the bright sunshine, and spoke to it as if the Christ-Child were really there. What beautiful summer days they were! How fresh and sweet it was out among the rose-bushes, which seemed as if they would never cease to bloom!

One day Kay and Gerda sat looking at a picture book of animals and birds, when just at the moment that the clock in the great church tower struck five, Kay said, “Oh, dear! something has struck my heart!” And soon after he said, “And now I have something in my eye!”

The little girl put her arms round his neck. He blinked his eye, but no—she could see nothing there.

“I think it is gone,” he said; but it was not gone. It was one of those pieces from the magic mirror. You remember that everything great and good which was reflected in it became bad and ugly, while everything bad and wicked could be more plainly seen. Poor Kay had got one of the fragments in his heart. It would soon become like a



lump of ice. The glass did not cause him any pain, but it was there.

“Why do you cry?” said the boy. “You look so ugly when you cry. There is nothing the matter with me. Fie!” he cried suddenly, “that rose is worm-eaten! And look, it is quite crooked! They are ugly roses, after all; just like the boxes they are in!” And then he kicked the box with his foot and knocked off two roses.

“Why, Kay, what are you doing?” cried the little girl; and when he saw her fright he knocked off another rose and rushed through his own window—away from dear little Gerda.

And afterwards he would even tease little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart. He no longer cared for the old games; he said he wanted only “what was sensible.” One winter’s day, when the snow was falling, he brought a large magnifying glass, and held out the tail of his blue coat and let the snowflakes fall upon it.

“Just look through this glass,” he said, and Gerda saw that every snowflake was magnified and looked like a splendid flower or star with many points.

“Is it not curious?” said Kay. “Much more interesting than real flowers. There is not a single fault in them. They are quite perfect till they begin to melt.”



Soon after Kay appeared in thick gloves and with his sledge at his back. He shouted up the stairs to Gerda, "I have got leave to go sledging in the great square, where all the boys are playing." And off he went.

Many of the boldest boys on the playground used to fasten their sledges to the wagons of the country people, and in this way they got a good ride. That was fine sport! When the fun was greatest a large sledge came driving past. It was painted white, and in it sat some one wrapped in a white furry coat and wearing a white furry cap. The sledge drove twice round the square, and Kay managed to get his own little sledge fastened to it, and then away he went with it. It went faster and faster right through the next street. The driver turned round and nodded in a pleasant way to Kay, as if they were old friends. Every time Kay wanted to loosen his sledge, the driver nodded to him as if to ask him to stay, and so Kay remained on the sledge, and soon they drove out through the town gate.

Then the snow began to fall so heavily that the little boy could hardly see a hand before him as they rushed onward. Suddenly he let go of the rope, to get loose from the large sledge, but it was of no use; his little sledge stuck fast to the other,







and they sped away as quickly as the wind. Then he called out loudly, but nobody heard him. The snow fell fast and furious. and the sledge flew onward, giving now and then a jump, as if rushing over hedges and ditches. The boy was frightened and tried to say a prayer, but he could only remember the multiplication table.

The snowflakes became larger and larger, till at last they looked like big white birds. All at once they sprang on one side, the great sledge stopped, and the person who had been driving stood up. The coat and the cap, which looked like fur, were made entirely of snow; they fell off, and Kay saw a lady, tall and lovely. It was the Snow Queen.

"We have got on quickly," she said. "But you are shivering with cold. Creep into my fur." Then she put him beside her in the sledge and wrapped the skin round him, and he felt as if he were sinking into a snowdrift.

"Do you still feel cold?" she asked, as she kissed him on his forehead. The kiss was colder than ice; it went right through his heart, which was already half frozen; he felt as if he were going to die, but only for a moment, and then he was quite well again, and did not feel the cold round him any more.

"My sledge! don't forget my sledge!" This was the first thing he thought of, and then he saw that



it was tied to one of the white birds, which came rushing on behind them with the sledge on its back. The Snow Queen kissed Kay once more, and then little Gerda and the grandmother and all at home passed out of Kay's mind altogether.

"I shall give you no more kisses," she said, "or I should kiss you to death."

Kay looked at her. She was very beautiful. She did not now seem to be made of ice, as when she sat outside of the window and beckoned to him.

He looked up into the vast space above as she flew higher and higher with him upon a black cloud, while the storm whistled and roared. They flew over woods and lakes, over sea and land. Below them the cold blast scoured the plains, the wolves howled, and over them flew the black, screeching crows, while the moon shone bright and clear on the sparkling snow. The long, dreary winter's night passed; by day the little boy slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.

### THE THIRD STORY

#### THE WITCH'S FLOWER GARDEN

But how did little Gerda fare when Kay did not return? Where could he be? Nobody knew; nobody could give any news of him. The boys could only tell that they had seen him tie his sledge to a large,



splendid one which drove down the street and out through the town gate. Nobody knew what had become of him. Many tears were shed for him, and little Gerda cried bitterly for a long time. Then they said he was dead; that he had been drowned in the river which flowed past the town. Oh, those were, indeed, long, dreary winter days.

Then came once more the spring with the warm sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone," said little Gerda.

"I don't believe it," said the sunshine.

"He is dead and gone," she said to the swallows.

"We don't believe it," they answered, and at last little Gerda did not believe it herself.

"I will put on my new red shoes," she said one morning, "those that Kay has never seen, and then I will go down to the river and ask it about him."

It was quite early. She kissed her old grandmother, who was asleep, put on the red shoes, and went out quite alone through the town gate toward the river.

"Is it true that you have taken my little playmate? I will make you a present of my red shoes if you will give him back to me," she said to the river.

And she thought the waves nodded to her strangely.



Then she took off her red shoes that she liked better than anything else she had, and threw them both out into the river, but they fell near the bank and the little waves carried them back to land. It seemed as if the river would not take the things she loved the best, because it could not give little Kay back to her. But she thought the shoes had not been thrown out far enough, and so she climbed into a boat which was lying among the reeds, and went to the farthest end of it and threw the shoes into the water again.

The boat was not fastened, and its motion as she got into it made it drift from the bank. When she noticed this she hurried to the other end again, but before she could jump to the shore the boat was a yard from the bank, and now it began to drift faster and faster.

Then little Gerda became quite frightened and began to cry, but no one heard her except the sparrows, and they could not carry her ashore; but they flew along the banks singing, as if to comfort her: "Here we are! Here we are!"

The boat drifted with the stream, while little Gerda sat quite still in her stocking feet. The little red shoes floated along behind, but she could not reach them, and they did not overtake the boat, because it drifted so fast.



The banks on both sides of the river were very pretty. There were beautiful flowers, old trees, and green sloping fields with sheep and cows, but not a human being was to be seen.

"Perhaps the river is carrying me to little Kay," thought Gerda, and then she became more cheerful, and stood up in the boat looking at the beautiful green banks. And so the boat sailed on till she came to a large cherry orchard where there was a little house with strange red and blue windows and a thatched roof.

Gerda called loudly, and there came a very old woman out of the house, leaning on a crutch. She wore a large hat to shade her eyes from the sun; on the hat were painted all sorts of lovely flowers.

"You poor little child," said the old woman, "how did you manage to drift so far into the wide world on such a rapid, rolling stream?" And then the old woman went right out into the water, hooked her crutch fast into the boat, pulled it ashore, and lifted little Gerda out of it.

Gerda was glad to get on land again, but she was a little afraid of the strange old woman.

"Come, tell me who you are, and how you came here," she said.

And Gerda told her everything, the old woman shaking her head all the time and saying, "Hem !







Hem!" When Gerda had told her all and asked her if she had not seen little Kay, the woman said he had not passed by there, but it was very likely that he would come.

She told Gerda to be of good cheer and taste her cherries and look at her flowers. "They are much prettier than any picture book," she said. She then took Gerda by the hand and went into the little house, locking the door after her.

The windows were high up near the ceiling, and the panes were red, blue, and yellow. The daylight shone through them in such a strange way, in all sorts of colors. On the table were the most delicious cherries, and Gerda ate as many as she liked. And while she was eating, the old woman combed out her long flaxen ringlets with a golden comb, and the glossy curls hung down on each side of the little round, pleasant face, which looked fresh and blooming as a rose.

"I have been longing for a dear little girl like you," said the old woman. "I know we shall get on well together." And while she went on combing little Gerda's hair, the child forgot about her little playmate, Kay, for the old woman was a witch, though not a wicked one. She only practised witchcraft for her own amusement, and did so now, because she wanted to keep little Gerda.



She, therefore, went out into her garden and stretched out her crutch toward all the rose-trees, and beautiful though they were, she caused them all to sink into the dark ground, so that no one could tell where they had once stood. The old woman was afraid that if Gerda saw the roses she would think of her own, and then remember little Kay and run away.

She now led Gerda out into the flower garden. Oh, how fragrant and lovely it was! Every flower of every season was there in full bloom; no picture book could be more beautiful. Gerda jumped for joy, and played till the sun went down behind the tall cherry trees. Then she was put to bed in a splendid bed with red silk quilts embroidered with violets, and there she slept, and dreamed happily all the night.

For many days after, Gerda played with the flowers in the warm sunshine. She knew every flower, and yet, although there were so many, she seemed to feel that one was missing, but she did not know which it was. Then, one day, as she sat looking at the old woman's hat with the painted flowers, she noticed that the prettiest of them all was a rose. The old woman had forgotten that she had a rose on her hat when she made all the roses in the garden sink into the earth.



“What, are there no roses here?” cried Gerda; and she ran among the flower beds, looking and searching, but there was not one to be found.

Then she sat down and cried, and her hot tears happened to fall just where a rose-tree had sunk into the ground. The warm tears moistened the earth, and the rose-tree sprouted up at once in full bloom, just as when it had disappeared. Gerda embraced it, kissed the roses, and thought of the beautiful roses at home, and with them of little Kay.

“Oh, how I have been losing my time!” said the little girl. “Why, I was going to find Kay. Do you know where he is?” she asked the roses. “Do you think he is dead?”

“He is not dead,” said the roses. “We have been under the ground where all the dead are, but Kay was not there.”

“Thank you,” said little Gerda, and she went to the other flowers and looked into their cups and asked, “Do you know where little Kay is?”

But all the flowers were standing in the sunshine, dreaming the fairy tale of their own lives. Gerda heard many of these stories, but none of the flowers knew anything about Kay.

Then she ran to the far end of the garden. The gate was shut, but she fumbled with the rusty



latch till it gave way, and the gate flew open, and then little Gerda ran out, barefooted, into the wide world. She looked back three times, but no one was following her. At last she could run no longer, so she sat down to rest on a large stone; and when she looked round she saw that the summer was over, and that it was late in the autumn. She had known nothing of this in the beautiful garden, where the sun shone and the flowers grew all the year round.

“Oh, dear, how I have wasted my time!” said little Gerda. “It is autumn; I must not rest any longer.” And she rose to go on; but her little feet were wounded and sore, and everything round her looked bleak and cold. Oh, how dark and dreary the whole world seemed!

## THE FOURTH STORY

### THE PRINCE AND THE PRINCESS

Gerda sat down to rest again, and just opposite the place where she sat she saw a great crow come hopping across the snow. He stood looking at her for some time, and then he wagged his head and said, “Caw, caw; good-day, good-day.” Then he asked where she was going all alone in the wide world.



Gerda told the crow the story of her life and asked him if he had not seen Kay.

The crow nodded his head gravely and said, "Perhaps I have—it may be."

"What? You don't say so!" cried the little girl, and she almost hugged the crow to death in her joy.

"Gently, gently!" said the crow. "I believe I know. I think it may be little Kay, but he has certainly forgotten you by this time for the princess."

"Does he live with a princess?" asked Gerda.

"Yes—listen," replied the crow; "but it is so difficult to speak your language. If you understand the crow's language then I can explain it better. Do you?"

"No, I have never learned it," said Gerda, "but grandmother understands it and used to speak it to me. I wish I had learned it."

"It does not matter," answered the crow. "I will tell you as well as I can, although I am afraid it will be badly done." And he told what he knew.

"In the kingdom where we now are," said he, "there lives a princess who is very wise and good. A short time ago when she was sitting on her throne she happened to hum a song which began with

'Why should I not be married?'

"'Yes, there is something in that,' she said, and



then she made up her mind to marry, if she could find a husband who knew what to say if he were spoken to ; not one who could do nothing but look grand, for that was so tiresome. She called all her court ladies together, and when they heard what she was thinking about they were much pleased. ‘We are so glad to hear it,’ said they ; ‘we were talking about it ourselves the other day.’ ”

“You may believe that every word I tell you is true,” said the crow, “for I have a tame sweetheart who goes freely about the palace, and she told me all this.”

Of course his sweetheart was a crow, for “birds of a feather flock together,” and one crow always chooses another crow.

“The newspapers at once announced that every good-looking young man would be received at the palace and allowed to speak with the princess, and that the one who pleased her most by his speech would be chosen by her for a husband.”

“Yes, yes, you may believe me, it is all as true as I sit here,” said the crow.

“The young men came in crowds to the palace, and there was much crushing and running to and fro, but no one was successful either on the first or the second day. They could all speak well enough when they were out in the street, but when they came through



the palace gates and saw the guards in silver uniform and the lackeys in gold livery standing on the staircases, and the great halls lighted up, they became quite confused, and when they stood before the throne on which the princess sat they could do nothing but repeat the last words she had said, and she did not care to hear that over again."

"There was a whole row of them from the town gate to the palace. I went in myself to have a look," said the crow.

"But Kay! Tell me about little Kay," said Gerda. "Was he among the crowd?"

"Patience! patience! We are just coming to him. It was on the third day that a small person, without a horse or carriage, came marching quite cheerfully right up to the palace. His eyes shone like yours; he had beautiful long hair, but his clothes were very poor."

"That was Kay," cried Gerda joyfully. "Oh, now I have found him!" And she clapped her hands.

"He had a little knapsack on his back," said the crow.

"No, it must have been his sledge," said Gerda, "for he had the sledge with him when he left home."

"That may be," said the crow. "I did not take



much notice, but I heard from my sweetheart that when he came in through the palace gate and saw the life guards in silver and the lackeys in gold on the staircase, he was not in the least afraid. He nodded to them and said, 'It must be very tiresome to stand on the staircase; I prefer to go inside.'

"The rooms were blazing with light, and the people of the court dressed in beautiful clothes were standing about; it was enough to make any one feel serious. His boots creaked dreadfully, but he was not a bit frightened."

"That must have been Kay," said Gerda. "I know he had new boots on; I heard them creak in grandmother's room."

"Yes, they did creak," said the crow, "but he went boldly up to the princess, who was seated on a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel, and all the ladies of the court were present with their maids and all the gentlemen-in-waiting with their servants."

"It must be very fine," said little Gerda; "but did Kay get the princess?"

"If I had not been a crow," said he, "I would have married her myself, although I am engaged. They say he spoke as well as I do when I speak the crow's language; at least that's what my sweetheart tells me. He was very free and agreeable; but he said that he had not come to woo the princess, but



to hear her wisdom ; and he was as pleased with her as she was with him."

"That was certainly Kay," said Gerda. "He was so clever ; he could do mental arithmetic even in fractions ! Oh, will you not take me to the palace?"

"It is very easy to ask that," replied the crow, "but how are we to manage it ? I will talk it over with my tame sweetheart ; she is sure to give good advice. For I must tell you it will be very hard for a little girl like you to enter the palace."

"Oh, but when Kay hears I am there he will be sure to come out and take me in."

"Wait for me by the stile over yonder," said the crow, with a twist of his head as he flew away.

It was late in the evening before the crow returned.

"Caw, caw," he croaked. "My sweetheart sends you her kind love, and here is a piece of bread for you which she took from the kitchen. There is plenty of bread there, and she thinks you must be hungry. You cannot possibly get into the palace by the front entrance—for, look, you are barefooted. The guards in silver and the lackeys in gold would not allow it. But don't cry ; you shall get in somehow. My sweetheart knows a little back staircase which leads up to the sleeping apartments, and she knows where to find the key."



Then they went into the garden through the great avenue where the leaves were falling, and they could see the lights in the palace. And when the lights were put out one after another, the crow led little Gerda to a back door, which stood ajar.

Oh, how Gerda's heart was beating! She felt as if she were going to do something wrong, and yet she only wanted to know where little Kay was.

They were now on the stairs, where a small lamp was burning on the top of a cupboard. In the middle of the room stood the tame crow, turning her head in all directions and staring at Gerda, who curtsied as her grandmother had taught her to do.

"My sweetheart has spoken very highly of you, my little lady," said the tame crow. "Your story is really very touching. If you will take the lamp I will go in front. We will go straight ahead, along this way; then we shall meet no one."

"It seems to me as if somebody were behind us," said Gerda, as something rushed by her like shadows on the wall.

"They are only dreams," said the crow; "they come to take the thoughts of our royal folks out a-hunting."

They now entered the first room, the walls of which were hung with rose-colored satin embroid-



ered with flowers. There the dreams again flitted by them, but so quickly that Gerda could not make out the royal persons.

As they passed on, each room was more splendid than the last; it was enough to bewilder any one. At length they reached a bedroom with two beds in it. The one in which the princess lay was white; the other was red; and it was in this that Gerda was to look for little Kay.

She pushed aside the curtains of the red bed and saw a little brown neck. Oh, that must be Kay! She called his name loudly, and held the lamp over him. He woke and turned his head round—it was not little Kay! The prince only looked like him.

The princess peeped out of her lily-white bed and asked what was the matter. Little Gerda then began to cry and told them her whole story and all that the crows had done for her.

“You poor child!” said the prince and the princess; then they praised the crows, and said that they should be rewarded.

“Would you like to have your freedom and fly away?” asked the princess, “or would you prefer to be raised to the position of court-crows, with all that is left in the kitchen for yourselves?”

Then both the crows curtsied, and begged to stay at the palace, where it was so nice and comfortable.



Then the prince got out of his bed and gave it up to Gerda, and she lay down. She folded her little hands and thought, "How good men and animals are to me!" and she closed her eyes and fell into a sweet sleep.

The next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet, and invited to stay at the palace and enjoy herself; but she only asked for a small coach and a horse to draw it, and a little pair of shoes, so that she might go out into the wide world to seek for Kay.

And she got not only the shoes, but a muff and beautiful clothes; and when she was ready to start, a new coach of pure gold, with four horses, was waiting for her at the door. The coachman and the footman wore gold crowns upon their heads. The coach was well stored with cakes, and under the seats were fruit and nuts. The prince and the princess themselves helped her into the coach, wished her success, and bade her farewell.

The crow from the forest, who was now married, went with her for the first ten miles; and the tame crow stood in the doorway flapping her wings.

Then, after a few miles, the crow also said "Farewell," and this parting was very sad. The crow flew up into a tree and flapped his black wings as long as he could see the coach.



## THE FIFTH STORY

## THE LITTLE ROBBER-GIRL

The coach drove on through a thick forest, where it lighted up the way like a torch. It dazzled the eyes of some robbers, who were watching it.

"It's gold! It's gold!" they cried, as they rushed out and seized the horses. They killed the coachman and the footman, and dragged Gerda out of the carriage.

"She shall play with me!" said a little girl who was the daughter of an ugly old robber-woman. "She shall give me her muff and her pretty dress and sleep with me in my bed."

"I will have a ride in the coach," said the little robber-girl; and she would have her own way, for she was spoiled and petted by the robbers. So she and Gerda seated themselves in the coach and drove away, over stumps and stones, into the depths of the forest.

The little robber-girl was about the same size as Gerda, but stronger; she had broader shoulders and a darker skin; her eyes were quite black, and she had a sad look.

She clasped little Gerda round her waist, and said, "They shall not kill you as long as I do not get angry with you. I suppose you are a princess."



“No,” said Gerda; and then she told her story, and how fond she was of little Kay.

The robber-girl looked earnestly at her, nodded her head slightly, and said, “They sha’nt kill you, even if I do get angry with you, for I will do it myself.” And then she wiped Gerda’s eyes and put her own hands into the beautiful muff which was so soft and warm.

The coach stopped in the courtyard of a robber’s castle, the walls of which were full of cracks from top to bottom. Ravens and crows flew in and out of the holes, while great bull-dogs, each of which looked as if it could swallow a man, were jumping about; but they were not allowed to bark.

In the large, smoky old hall a big fire was burning in the middle of the stone floor. There was no chimney, so the smoke went up to the ceiling and found a way out for itself. Soup was boiling in a large caldron,<sup>1</sup> and hares and rabbits were being roasted on large spits.<sup>2</sup>

“You shall sleep here with me and all my little animals to-night,” said the robber-girl after they had something to eat and drink. Then they went over into a corner where there were blankets and some straw.

<sup>1</sup> Caldron—a large kettle or boiler.

<sup>2</sup> Spit—an iron spike on which meat is roasted before an open fire.



On poles and laths above their heads were sitting about a hundred pigeons. They all seemed to be asleep, but they turned their heads slightly when the little girls came into the room.

"They are all mine," said the little robber-girl.

"There are the wood-pigeons!" she went on, and pointed to a hole high up on the wall, with a number of laths nailed across it. "Both those rascals would fly away at once, if they were not closely locked up. And here is my old sweetheart, 'Ba';" and she dragged out a reindeer by the horn. He wore a bright copper ring round his neck, and was tied up. "We have to look closely after him, too, else he also would run away from us. Every evening I tickle his neck with that sharp knife of mine, of which he is terribly afraid." And the robber-girl drew a long knife from a chink in the wall, and let it slide gently over the reindeer's neck. The poor animal began to kick, and the little robber-girl laughed, and pulled down Gerda into bed with her.

"Do you take the knife to bed with you?" asked Gerda, looking at it in great fright.

"I always sleep with the knife by me," said the robber-girl. "One never knows what may happen. But now tell me again all about little Kay, and why you went out into the wide world."

Then Gerda told her story all over again, while



the wood-pigeons were cooing up in their cage and the other birds slept. The little robber-girl put one arm across Gerda's neck, and held the knife in the other hand, and was soon sleeping soundly. But Gerda could not close her eyes at all, for she did not know whether she was to live or die. The robbers came in and sat round the fire, singing and drinking. It was a terrible sight for a little girl!

Then the wood-pigeons suddenly cried, "Coo! Coo! we have seen little Kay. A white bird carried his sledge while he sat in the Snow Queen's sledge as they drove through the forest and we lay in our nests. Her icy breath killed all the young ones except us two. Coo! Coo!"

"What are you saying up there?" cried Gerda. "Where was the Snow Queen going? Do you know anything about it?"

"She was going to Lapland, no doubt, where there is always snow and ice. Just ask the reindeer who is fastened over there."

"Yes; there is ice and snow there," said the reindeer. "It is a glorious place; you can leap and run about freely on the sparkling, icy plains. The Snow Queen has her summer tent there, but her strong castle is at the North Pole, on an island called Spitzbergen."

"Oh, Kay, little Kay!" sighed Gerda.



“Lie still,” said the robber-girl; “or you shall feel my knife.”

In the morning Gerda told her everything that the wood-pigeons had said, and the little robber-girl looked quite serious, but nodded her head and said, “It doesn’t matter ! it doesn’t matter ! Do you know where Lapland is ?” she asked the reindeer.

“Who should know better than I ?” the reindeer said, its eyes sparkling with excitement. “I was born and brought up there, and used to run about the snow-covered plains.”

“Now listen,” said the robber-girl. “All our men are gone away. Only mother is here, and here she will stay ; but at noon she always drinks out of a great bottle, and afterwards sleeps for a little while. Then I’ll do something for you !”

When the mother had gone to sleep, the little robber-maiden went to the reindeer and said, “I should like very much to tickle your neck a few times more with my knife, for it makes you look so funny ; but never mind, I will undo your rope and set you free, so that you may set out for Lapland. But you must make good use of your legs, and carry this little maiden to the palace of the Snow Queen, where her playfellow is. You have heard what she told me, for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening.”



The reindeer jumped for joy ; and the little robber-girl lifted Gerda on his back, and had the forethought to tie her on, and even to give her a little cushion for a saddle.

“Here are your fur-lined boots,” said she, “for it will be very cold ; but I must keep the muff—it is so pretty. However, you shall not be frozen for the want of it. Here are my mother’s large, warm mittens ; they will reach up to your elbows. Let me put them on. There, now your hands look just like my mother’s.”

Gerda wept for joy.

“I don’t like to see you fret,” said the little robber-girl. “You ought to look quite happy now. And here are two loaves and a ham, so that you need not starve.”

The things were fastened upon the reindeer, and then the little robber-maiden opened the door, coaxed in all the great dogs, cut the string with which the reindeer was fastened, and said, “Now run ! but mind you take good care of the little girl.”

And Gerda stretched out her hands with the large gloves toward the robber-girl and said, “Farewell,” and away flew the reindeer—over stumps and stones, through the great forest, over marshes and plains, as quickly as he could. The wolves howled, and the ravens screamed ; while up in the sky quivered



red lights like flames of fire. "There are my old Northern Lights," said the reindeer. "See how they flash!" And he ran on day and night still faster and faster. But the loaves and the ham were all eaten by the time they reached Lapland.

## THE SIXTH STORY

### THE LAPWOMAN AND THE FINWOMAN

They stopped at a little hut. The roof sloped nearly down to the ground, and the door was so low that the family had to creep on their hands and knees when they went in and out. There was no one at home, except an old Lapwoman, who was cooking fish over an oil lamp.

The reindeer told her Gerda's story, after having first told his own which seemed to him more important; but Gerda was so pinched with the cold that she could not speak.

"Oh, you poor thing," said the Lapwoman, "you have a long way to go yet. You must travel four hundred miles into Finland. The Snow Queen lives there now; she burns blue lights every evening. I will write one or two lines on a dried cod-fish, for I have no paper, and you can take it from me to the Finwoman who lives there. She can tell you more about it than I can."



So when Gerda was warmed and had taken something to eat and drink, the woman wrote a few words on the dried fish, and told Gerda to take great care of it. Then she tied her again on the reindeer, and he set off at full speed. Up in the heavens the beautiful Northern Lights blazed the whole night long; and then they came to Finland, and knocked at the chimney of the Finwoman's hut—for it had no door above the ground.

The Finwoman was small and dirty looking. She wore scarcely any clothes, for it was very hot in the hut.

She loosened little Gerda's dress, and took off the fur boots and the mittens, or Gerda would have been unable to bear the heat. Then she placed a piece of ice on the reindeer's head, and read what was written on the dried fish. After she had read it three times she knew it by heart; then she popped the fish into the saucepan, as she knew it was good to eat, and she never wasted anything.

The reindeer told his own story first and then little Gerda's, and the Finwoman blinked with her knowing eyes, but said nothing.

"You are so clever," said the reindeer. "Can you not give this little maiden something which will make her as strong as twelve men, to overcome the Snow Queen?"



“The power of twelve men !” said the Finwoman. “That would be of very little use.” But she went to a shelf and took down and unrolled a large skin, on which were written queer looking marks, and she read till the perspiration ran down from her forehead.

But the reindeer begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked at the Finwoman with such tender, tearful eyes, that her own eyes began to blink again, and, leading the reindeer into a corner, the Finwoman put some fresh ice on his head and whispered :

“Little Kay is really with the Snow Queen, but he likes it there so much that he believes it is the finest place in the world ; and this is because he has a piece of broken glass in his heart and a fragment of it in his eye. These must be got out, or he will never be himself again, and the Snow Queen will keep her power over him.”

“But can you not give little Gerda something to help her overcome this power ?”

“I can give her no greater power than she has already,” said the woman. “Don’t you see how strong that is ? Do you not see how men and animals serve her, and how she, barefooted, has got on so safely through the world ? She cannot receive any power from me greater than she now



has, which consists in her own purity and innocence of heart. If she cannot herself get to the Snow Queen and remove the glass fragments from little Kay, we can do nothing to help her. Two miles from here the Snow Queen's garden begins. You can carry the little girl so far and set her down by the large bush which stands in the snow, covered with red berries. Don't stay gossiping, but come back here as quickly as you can." Then the Finwoman lifted little Gerda upon the reindeer, and he ran away with her as quickly as he could.

"Oh, I have forgotten my boots and mittens," cried Gerda, as soon as she felt the cutting cold; but the reindeer dared not stop—he ran on till he reached the bush with the red berries. Here he set Gerda down, and he kissed her, and the great, bright tears trickled over the animal's cheeks. Then he left her and ran back as fast as he could.

There stood poor Gerda, without shoes, without gloves, in the midst of cold, dreary, ice-bound Finland.

She ran as fast as her legs could carry her. Soon she came upon a whole army of snowflakes. They did not, however, fall from the sky, which was quite clear and glittered with the Northern Lights. The snowflakes ran along the ground, and the



nearer they came to her the larger they seemed. Gerda remembered how large and beautiful they looked through the magnifying glass. But these were larger and more terrible, for they were alive and were the guards of the Snow Queen, and had the strangest shapes. Some were like porcupines; others like twisted serpents, with their heads stretching out; and some few were like little fat bears with bristling hairs; but all were dazzlingly white, and all were living snowflakes.

Little Gerda then said the Lord's Prayer. The cold was so great that she could see her own breath come out of her mouth like steam as she said the words. Her breath grew thicker and thicker and formed itself into bright little angels, who grew larger and larger as soon as they touched the ground. They all had helmets on their heads and spears and shields in their hands. Their numbers increased every moment, and when Gerda had finished saying her prayer there was a whole army round her.

They struck at the terrible snowflakes with their spears and shattered them into a hundred pieces, and now little Gerda could go safely on her way. The angels stroked her hands and feet, so that she did not feel the cold so much, and she walked on quickly toward the Snow Queen's palace.



But now we must see what Kay was doing. In truth, he thought not of little Gerda, and least of all that she could be standing in front of the palace.

### THE SEVENTH STORY

#### THE PALACE OF THE SNOW QUEEN AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE

The walls of the palace were made of the drifting snow and the windows and doors of the cutting winds. There were more than a hundred rooms in it, all as if they had been formed of snow blown together. The largest of them stretched for many miles. The Northern Lights shed their vivid beams upon them; but oh, how cold and empty they were in their dazzling whiteness.

In the midst of this empty, endless hall of snow was a frozen lake which had cracked into a thousand pieces, and every piece was exactly like the other. In the centre of this lake, which she called "The Mirror of Reason," sat the Snow Queen when she was at home.

Little Kay was quite blue, almost black with cold, but he did not feel it, for the Snow Queen had kissed away the icy shiverings, and his heart was already a lump of ice. He dragged some sharp, flat pieces of ice to and fro and placed them together in



all kinds of positions, as if he wished to make something out of them, just as when we try to make different figures with little pieces of wood, which we call a "Chinese puzzle."

Kay's figures were very hard to make. It was the icy game of reason at which he played, and in his eyes the figures were very remarkable and of the highest importance. He thought this, because the splinter of glass was still sticking in his eye. Kay formed complete figures which made written words, but he was never able to form the word he most wanted. It was the word "Eternity."

The Snow Queen had said, "If you can make that figure you shall be your own master, and I will make you a present of the whole world and a pair of new skates." But he could not do it.

"Now I must hasten away to warmer countries," said the Snow Queen. "I will go and look into the black craters of the tops of the burning mountains. I shall make them look white, which will be good for them and for the lemons and the grapes."

Away flew the Snow Queen, leaving little Kay quite alone in the great hall. He sat and looked at the pieces of ice. He was thinking so deeply and sat so still that any one might have supposed he was frozen.

Just then little Gerda entered the palace through



the great gate where a biting wind was raging, but she said a little prayer and the winds sank down as if they were going to sleep. On she went till she came to the large empty hall and caught sight of Kay. She knew him at once. She flew to him and threw her arms round his neck and held him fast, while she cried, "Kay, dear little Kay, I have found you at last."

But he sat quite still, stiff and cold.

Then little Gerda began to cry, shedding hot tears, which fell upon his breast and made their way into his heart and thawed the lump of ice and washed away the little piece of glass which had stuck there. Then he looked at her, and she sang:

"The roses grow in the valley,  
Where the Christ-Child we shall see."

Then Kay burst into tears. He cried so hard that the splinter of glass swam out of his eye. Then he knew Gerda, and said joyfully, "Gerda, dear little Gerda, where have you been all this time, and where have I been?" And he looked all around him, and said, "How cold it is, and how large and empty it looks here," and he clung to Gerda, and she laughed and wept for joy.

It was so pleasing to see them that even the pieces of ice danced; and when they were tired and went to



lie down, they formed themselves into the letters of the word which the Snow Queen had said Kay must find out before he could be his own master and have the whole world and a new pair of skates.

And Gerda kissed his cheeks, and their bloom came back again; she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he became quite healthy once more. The Snow Queen might come home now when she pleased, for there stood the word she wanted, written in letters of shining ice, and Kay was free.

Then they took each other by the hand and went forth from the great palace of ice. They spoke of the grandmother and of the roses on the roof, and as they went on, the winds were at rest, and the sun burst forth. When they came to the bush with red berries, there stood the reindeer waiting for them, and he had brought a young reindeer cow with him, whose udders were full, and the children drank her warm milk and kissed her on the mouth.

They carried Kay and Gerda first to the Finwoman's hut, where they warmed themselves in the hot room, and she told them how to get home. Next they went to the Lapwoman, who had made some new clothes for them, and got her sledge ready for them. Both the reindeer ran by their side, and followed them as far as the boundaries



of the country, where the first green leaves were budding. And here they took leave of the two reindeer and the Lapwoman, and they all said, "Farewell."

Then birds began to twitter, and the forest was full of young green leaves; and out of it came a beautiful horse, which Gerda remembered, for it was one of those which had drawn the golden coach. A young girl was riding upon it with a shining red cap on her head and pistols in her belt. It was the little robber-maiden. She knew Gerda at once, and Gerda knew her: it was a joyful meeting.

"You are a fine fellow to go gadding about in this way," said she to little Kay. "I should like to know whether you deserve that any one should go to the end of the world to find you."

But Gerda patted her cheeks, and asked after the prince and the princess.

"They are gone to foreign countries," said the robber-girl.

"And the crow?" asked Gerda.

"Oh, the crow is dead," she replied. "His tame sweetheart is now a widow and wears a bit of black worsted round her leg. But now tell me how you managed to get him back."

Then Gerda and Kay told her all about it.



“Snip, snap, snurre! it’s all right at last!” said the robber-girl.

She took both their hands, and promised that if ever she should pass through their town, she would call and pay them a visit. And then she rode away.

But Gerda and Kay went hand in hand toward home; and as they came nearer the spring appeared more and more lovely with its green leaves and beautiful flowers. Very soon they saw the large town where they lived and the tall steeples of the churches in which the sweet bells were ringing a merry peal.

They entered the town and found their way to the grandmother’s door. They went up the stairs into the little parlor, where everything was in the same place as before. The old clock was going “tick, tick,” and the hands pointed to the time of day; but as they passed through the door into the room, they discovered that they were both grown up, and become a man and woman. The roses out on the roof were in full bloom and peeped in at the window, and there stood the little stools. Kay and Gerda sat down holding each other by the hand, and the memory of the dreary palace of the Snow Queen vanished like a painful dream.

Grandmother sat in the bright sunshine reading



aloud from the Bible, "Except ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God." And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes and all at once understood the words of the old hymn :

" The roses grow in the valley,  
Where the Christ-Child we shall see."

And they both sat there, grown up, yet children at heart ; and it was summer—warm, beautiful summer.



## THE TINDER-BOX

Once upon a time a soldier came marching along the highroad "left, right—left, right." He had his knapsack on his back and a sword by his side, for he had been in the wars and he was now on his way home. He met an old witch on the road. She was very ugly; her under lip hung right down upon her breast.

"Good evening, soldier," said the old witch. "What a fine sword and what a big knapsack you have! You are a real soldier; you shall have as much money as you want."

"Thank you, old woman," said the soldier.

"Do you see that tree?" said the witch, pointing to a tree which stood beside them. "It is quite hollow inside. You must climb to the top, where you will see a hole through which you can let yourself slide down and get far down into the tree. I will tie a rope round your waist, so that I can pull you up again when you call me."

"What shall I do down in the tree?" asked the soldier.

"Get money," said the witch. "Listen to me. When you get to the bottom of the tree you will



find yourself in a large hall lighted up by three hundred lamps. You will see three doors which you can open ; the keys are in the locks.

“When you get into the first room you will see in the middle of the floor a large chest, on the top of which a dog is sitting. He has a pair of eyes as large as teacups, but you must not mind that. I will give you my blue checked apron, which you must spread out on the floor ; then go quickly and take the dog, put him on my apron, open the chest, and take as many pennies as you like.

“They are all of copper ; but if you would rather have silver you must go into the next room. There a dog is sitting with a pair of eyes as large as mill-wheels, but you must not mind that ; put him on my apron and help yourself to the money.

If, however, you want gold you can have that as well, and as much as you can carry if you will go into the third room. But the dog that sits on the chest there has eyes as big as a tower, but don't trouble about him either. Just put him on my apron and he will not harm you, and take as much gold as you like from the chest.”

“That's not at all bad,” said the soldier. “But what am I to give you, old witch, for, of course, you want something yourself?”

“No,” said the witch, “I do not ask for a single



penny. Only promise to bring me an old tinder-box which my grandmother left behind the last time she was down there."

"Very well; I promise. Let me get the rope round my waist," said the soldier.

"Here it is," said the witch, "and here is my blue checked apron."



The soldier then climbed up into the tree, let himself down into the hole, and stood now, as the witch had said, in a great hall where three hundred lamps were burning.



He opened the first door, and there sat the dog with eyes as large as teacups staring at him.

“You’re a nice fellow,” said the soldier, and he set him on the witch’s apron and took as many copper pennies as his pockets could hold. Then he locked the chest, set the dog on it again, and went into the second room. Aha! there sat the dog with eyes as big as mill-wheels.

“You shouldn’t stare so hard at me,” said the soldier; “it might hurt your eyes.” And he put the dog on the witch’s apron. But when he saw all the silver money in the chest he threw away all the copper money he had, and filled his pockets and knapsack with the silver money. Then he went into the third room. But, oh, horror! The dog in there really had eyes as big as towers, and they went round and round in his head like wheels.

“Good evening,” said the soldier, and he touched his cap, for he had never seen such a dog as that before. But after looking at him closely for a while, the soldier thought he had been civil enough, so he placed the dog on the apron, and opened the chest. Oh! what a lot of gold! Enough to buy the whole town if he wished. Yes, there was plenty of money, sure enough.

The soldier now threw away all the silver money he had, and took gold coin instead. He filled his



pockets and knapsack, his cap and his boots, so that he could hardly walk. Now he had plenty of money! He put the dog back on the chest, closed the door, and then called up through the tree:

“Now, pull me up, old witch.”

“Have you the tinder-box?” asked the witch.

“Why, no,” said the soldier. “I had forgotten all about it.” Then he went and got the tinder-box.

The witch drew him up, and he stood on the highroad once more, with his pockets, his knapsack, his cap, and his boots full of money.

“What are you going to do with the tinder-box?” asked the soldier.

“That has nothing to do with you,” said the witch.

“If you don’t tell me,” said the soldier, “I’ll cut your head off.”

“No!” said the witch.

So the soldier drew his sword and cut off her head.

Then he put the tinder-box in his pocket, threw his money into the old woman’s apron, tossed it like a bundle across his back, and set out for the town.

It was a fine town. He put up at the very best inn, ordered the best rooms and the dishes he was fond of—for now he was rich and could have what he liked.

The servant who cleaned his boots thought they



were very shabby for such a rich man to wear, for he had not yet had time to buy new ones. The next day, however, he got new boots and fine clothes; and now the soldier looked like a fine gentleman, and the people told him about all the grand things in their town, and about the king, and what a beautiful princess his daughter was.

“Where can one see her?” asked the soldier.

“She is not to be seen at all,” they said; “she lives in a big palace of copper, with many walls and towers round it. No one but the king can go in and out there, because it has been foretold that she will marry a common soldier, and the king will not hear of that.”

“I should like very much to see her,” thought the soldier, but of course he could not do that.

He began leading a merry life; he went to the theatre and drove in the king's park. He also gave a great deal of money to the poor, for he remembered how hard it was to be poor.

He now had a number of friends who all said he was a “jolly fellow,” and this the soldier liked to hear.

But as he went on spending money every day, and did not get any more, he was at last left with only two shillings. He had to give up the nice rooms he had been living in, and move to a tiny



garret, under the roof, where he had to brush his own boots and to mend them with a darning-needle; and none of his friends came to see him, for they all said they could not walk up so many stairs.

One dark evening he found he was not even able to buy himself a candle, when suddenly he remembered there was a candle-end in the tinder-box, which he had taken out of the hollow tree for the old witch.

He got the tinder-box, but no sooner had he struck a few sparks from the flint and steel, than the door flew open, and the dog with eyes as big as teacups stood before him, and said :

“What orders, master?”

“Hello, what’s this?” said the soldier. “This is a jolly tinder-box if I can get what I want in this way.”

“Bring me some money,” said he to the dog; and off the dog went; and the next minute he was back again, holding a large bag full of money in his mouth.

The soldier very soon discovered the value of the tinder-box. If he struck it once, the dog who sat on the chest with the copper money came; if he struck it twice, the one who had charge of the silver money came; and if he struck it thrice, the one who had the gold came.

So the soldier moved down into his nice rooms



again, got fine clothes once more, and then all his friends remembered to come to see him and seemed to be very fond of him.

One day he thought to himself, "It is very strange that no one can get a sight of that princess. They all say she is very beautiful, but what is the good of that when she must always sit inside that great copper palace? Shall I ever be able to see her, I wonder. But where is my tinder-box?" He struck a light and, whisk! there stood the dog with eyes as large as teacups.

"It's midnight, I know," said the soldier, "but I should like so much to see the princess, if only for a moment."

The dog was out of the room in an instant, and before the soldier could give it a thought, he saw him returning with the princess, who was lying on the dog's back asleep. She was so lovely that any one could see she was a real princess. The soldier could not help it; he had to kiss her.

The dog then ran back with the princess. But in the morning, while having breakfast with her parents, the princess told them she had such a wonderful dream in the night about a dog and a soldier. She had ridden upon the dog, and the soldier had kissed her.

"That's a pretty story, I must say!" said the queen.



One of the court ladies was then set to watch by the princess's bedside next night, to see if it really had been a dream, or what it might be.

The soldier had a great longing to see the lovely



princess again, and in the night the dog came for her. He took her on his back and ran as fast as he could, but the court lady put on spring-heeled boots and ran behind, keeping up the same pace as they. When she saw them disappear in a big house, she thought to herself: "Now I know where it is," and she made a big cross on the gate with a piece of



chalk. She then went home, and soon afterward the dog came back with the princess ; but when he saw that a cross had been put on the gate where the soldier lived, he took a piece of chalk and made a cross on all the gates all over the town, so that the court lady might not be able to find out the right gate.

Early the next morning the king and queen went with the court lady and the officers of the household to see where the princess had been.

“There it is!” said the king, when he saw the first gate with a cross on it.

“No, my dear, there it is!” said the queen, who saw another gate with a cross.

“But here is one, and there is one!” said all of them ; wherever they looked there were crosses on the gates. So they knew it would be of no use to go on searching any farther.

But the queen was a very clever woman ; she could do something more than ride in a carriage. She took her large pair of gold scissors and cut out a neat bag from a piece of silk. This bag she filled with fine wheat flour and tied it round the princess’s neck. Then she cut a small hole in the bag, so that the flour might be scattered on the ground along the way the princess went.

In the night the dog came again. He took



the princess on his back and ran with her to the soldier, who was so deeply in love with her, and who wished so much he had been a prince, that he might make her his wife.

The dog did not notice that the flour was running out of the bag all the way from the palace right up to the soldier's window, where he climbed up along the wall with the princess.

In the morning the king and queen could easily see where their daughter had been, and so they took the soldier and put him in prison.

There he sat. Oh, how dark and miserable it was! And the people said to him, "To-morrow you will be hanged." That was not pleasant to hear, and besides, he had left the tinder-box at the inn.

Next morning he could see through the little window between the iron bars how the people were hurrying out of the town to see him hanged. He could hear the drums beating, and see the soldiers marching. All the people ran out to look at them, and a shoemaker's boy, with a leather apron and with slippers on his feet, ran so fast that one of his slippers flew off and struck against the wall where the soldier stood looking out through the iron grating.

"Hello, you shoemaker's boy! You need not be in such a hurry," said the soldier to him; "there'll



be nothing going on till I come! If you will run over to where I have been living and get my tinder-box, I'll give you four shillings; but you must put your best foot foremost."

The shoemaker's boy was glad to earn the four shillings, and rushed off and got the tinder-box, and gave it to the soldier. And now we shall see what happened.

Outside the town a large gibbet had been raised, and round about stood the soldiers and many hundred thousand people. The king and the queen sat on a beautiful throne right opposite the judges and the whole court.

The soldier was already standing at the top of the ladder, but as they were going to place the halter round his neck, he said that they always allowed a poor sinner to have an innocent wish granted before he suffered his punishment. He would like so much to smoke a pipe of tobacco; it would be the last pipe he would get in this world.

The king would not say no to that, and so the soldier took the tinder-box and struck a light once, twice, thrice! and there stood all the dogs—the one with eyes as big as teacups, the one with eyes as large as mill-wheels, and the one whose eyes were like towers.

"Now help me, so that I shall not be hanged,"



said the soldier. Then the dogs rushed at the judges and the whole court, seized one by the legs and one by the nose, and tossed them all miles up in the air.

“I will not be touched,” said the king. But the largest dog seized him, and threw him after the others.

Then the soldiers and all the people were afraid, and cried, “Good soldier, you shall be our king, and you shall marry the beautiful princess.”

So they placed the soldier in the king’s carriage, and the three dogs ran on in front and cried, “Hurrah!” and the little boys whistled through their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms.

The princess came out of the copper castle, and was married to the soldier. The wedding lasted a whole week, and the dogs sat at the table and stared with all their eyes.



# THE WILD SWANS

## I

### THE MAGIC SPELL

Far away from here, in the land where the swallows make their home when we have winter, there lived a king who had eleven sons and one daughter named Elisa.

The eleven brothers, who were all princes, went to school each with a star on his breast and a sword by his side; they wrote on golden slates with diamond pencils, and knew their lessons by heart just as well as if they read them from a book. One could see at a glance that they were princes. Yes, these children led a happy life, but it was not always to be so.

Their mother died when Elisa was a very little girl, and the king married a wicked woman who was not at all kind to the poor children. They felt this the very first day.

When the wedding took place, there was a great feast at the palace, and the children were playing at "having company," but instead of their getting, as they always did, all the cakes and roasted apples



that they wanted, the queen gave them only sand in a teacup, and said they might pretend it was something nice.

The next week she sent Elisa away to some peasants in the country, and before long she made the king believe all sorts of things about the poor princes, so that he did not trouble himself any more about them.

“Fly out into the world and shift for yourselves,” said the wicked queen. And the princes were turned into eleven wild swans. With a strange cry they flew out through the palace windows and away over the park and the forest.

It was still quite early in the morning when they passed the peasant’s cottage where their sister lay asleep. Here they flew round and round over the roof, twisting their long necks and flapping their wings, but nobody heard or saw them; they had to set out again, high up toward the clouds, till they came to a great, gloomy forest which reached down to the shore.

Poor little Elisa was standing in the peasant’s parlor, playing with a green leaf, the only plaything she had. She made a hole in the leaf, looked up at the sun through it, and thought she saw the bright eyes of her brothers.

One day passed just like another. When the



wind blew through the big hedges of roses outside the cottage, it would whisper to the roses, "Who can be more beautiful than you?" And the roses shook their heads and said, "Elisa." And when the old woman sat in the doorway on a Sunday reading her hymn-book, the wind would turn over the leaves and say to the book, "Who can be better than you?" "Elisa!" answered the hymn-book. And it was the real truth that the roses and the hymn-book said.

When Elisa was fifteen years old, the time came for her to return to her father's palace. She was very beautiful, and when the stepmother saw this she was filled with anger and hatred against the young girl. She would have liked to turn her into a wild swan like her brothers, but she dared not do so, as the king would, of course, want to see his daughter.

Early in the morning the queen went into the bath, which was built of marble, and where there were soft cushions and beautiful rugs. She took three toads, kissed them, and said to one of them, "Sit on Elisa's head when she gets into the bath, so that she may become lazy like yourself!" "Sit on her forehead," she said to the second toad, "so that she may become ugly like yourself, and her father will not know her!" "Rest close to her



heart," she whispered to the third; "let her heart become wicked, so that she may suffer through it!" She then put the toads into the clear water, which at once turned a greenish color.

She called Elisa, undressed her, and let her go into the water, and as the young girl ducked her head, one of the toads settled itself on her hair, another on her forehead, and the third on her breast; but Elisa did not seem to notice them. As soon as she stood up, there were three red poppies floating on the water. The toads had become flowers, through resting on her head and near her heart, because she was so good and innocent. If they had not been poisonous, and if the wicked queen had not touched them, they would have turned to roses.

When the wicked queen saw this, she took some walnut juice and rubbed Elisa with it till she became quite brown; then she smeared her pretty face with an ill-smelling salve, and ruffled her lovely hair, so that no one would have known the beautiful princess.

When her father saw her he became quite frightened, and said that she was not his daughter. Poor Elisa! only the house-dog and the swallows seemed to know her.

Then she began to cry and thought of her eleven brothers, who were all lost to her. She stole out of the palace and walked the whole day across



fields and meadows till she came to a big forest. She did not know where she wanted to go, but she felt very sad and longed, oh so much, for her brothers. She felt sure that they, too, had been driven out into the world, and she made up her mind she would try to find them.

She had been in the forest only a short time, when night set in. She had strayed away from the paths; so she lay down on the soft moss, said her evening prayers, and leaning her head up against the stump of a tree, went to sleep.

The whole night long she dreamed about her brothers and how they were all playing again as children, writing with diamond pencils on golden slates.

It was late when she awoke. She heard the splashing of water, and making her way through the thick bushes, she found a beautiful lake, so clear and still that she could see herself plainly in it.

As soon as she saw her own face she became frightened, so brown and ugly was it, but when she wet her hand and rubbed her eyes and forehead, the white skin shone through. Then she took off all her clothes and went into the fresh water and bathed, and when she came out, a prettier royal child than she could not have been found in the world.

When she was dressed again, and had plaited



her long hair, she went to the sparkling spring and drank out of the hollow of her hand.

She wandered farther and farther into the forest without knowing where she was going, but she felt that God would take care of her. She found some wild forest apples and made her dinner of them. It was so quiet in the forest that she heard her own footsteps, heard every little dry leaf crushed under her foot; not a bird was to be seen, and the trees grew so thickly that the sun could not shine through their branches.

The night was very dark—not one single little glow-worm glittered in the moss—but Elisa lay down again and slept, and had happy dreams.

## II

### THE FLIGHT OVER THE SEA

In the morning she met an old woman with a basket of berries, and the woman gave her some. Elisa asked her if she had not seen eleven princes riding through the forest.

“No,” said the old woman; “but yesterday I saw eleven swans, with golden crowns on their heads, swimming down the river close by.”

And she led Elisa some distance farther till they



came to a slope at the bottom of which a river wound its way.

Elisa bade farewell to the old woman, and walked along the river till it flowed out into the great open sea.

The ocean lay before the young girl, but not a sail was to be seen out there; not a boat was in sight. How was she to continue her journey? She looked at the countless little pebbles on the shore. The water had worn them quite round. Glass, iron, stones, everything that had been washed up by the sea had been shaped by the water.

“It rolls on and on always, and the hardest substance must in the end yield to it. I will be just as patient. Thanks for the lesson you have given me, you clear, rolling waves! One day, my heart tells me, you will carry me to my dear brothers.”

Elisa sat watching the changing clouds and the beautiful sea till sunset. Then, suddenly, she saw eleven swans, with golden crowns upon their heads, flying toward the land, one behind another. Elisa went up the slope and hid herself behind a bush. The swans settled down close to her, and began flapping their large, white wings.

The moment the sun sank below the water's edge the swans' plumage fell off the birds, and there stood eleven handsome princes, Elisa's brothers. She gave







a loud cry, for although they had changed greatly, she knew it was they. She ran into their arms and called them by their names.

The brothers were delighted when they knew who it was and saw how tall and beautiful their sister had become. They laughed and they cried, and soon they came to understand how cruel their stepmother had been to them all.

“We brothers,” said the eldest, “must fly all day, as long as the sun is in the sky; when it goes down we take our human shape again. At sunset we must always take care to be near a resting-place, for if at that time we were to fly toward the clouds, we should, as human beings, be plunged into the depths of the sea.”

“We do not live here, but across the wide sea. There is no island on the way on which we can rest for the night, only a lonely little rock, just large enough for us all to rest upon when we sit side by side.”

“We are only allowed to visit our own home once a year, and then we can only stay eleven days. We have now but two more days left. How shall we take you with us? We have neither ship nor boat.”

“How shall I be able to save you?” asked the sister.

And so they went on talking nearly the whole night, and only for a few hours did they get any sleep.



Elisa awoke at the sound of the rustling of wings. Her brothers had again been turned into swans, and were flying in large circles above her head, till at last they flew far away and out of sight.

But one of them, the youngest, remained behind. He laid his head on her lap, while she stroked his white wings. Toward evening the others came back, and when the sun had gone down, they took their human shape again.

“To-morrow we must fly away from here, and we dare not return for a whole year; but we cannot leave you here. Have you the courage to come with us? Perhaps all our wings would be strong enough to carry you across the sea.”

“Yes, take me with you,” said Elisa.

They spent the whole night in making a big, strong net of the soft willow bark and the tough swamp grass. Upon this Elisa lay down, and when the sun rose and her brothers had been changed into wild swans, they seized the net with their beaks and flew high up toward the clouds with their dear sister, who was still asleep. The sunbeams fell on her face, and one of the swans flew over her head so that his broad wings could give her shade.

They were far away from land when Elisa awoke. She thought she was still dreaming, so strange did it seem to her to be carried high up in the air across



the sea. By her side lay a branch with ripe berries, which her youngest brother had gathered and placed at her side. She smiled at him, for she knew it was he who flew right over her head and shaded her with his wings.

They were so high up that the first ship they saw below them looked like a white sea-gull lying upon the water.

Like an arrow they shot through the air the whole day. Toward evening dark clouds gathered, and Elisa was beginning to feel afraid, when she caught sight of the little rock. It did not seem larger than the head of a seal.

The sun was almost set when her foot touched the firm ground. Suddenly she saw her brothers standing round her, arm in arm, but there was only just room enough for them all.

The sea dashed against the rock and came upon them like a heavy shower of rain; flashes of lightning appeared in the sky, and they could hear peal after peal of thunder; but sister and brothers held each other by the hands, talking and singing hymns the whole night long.

At daybreak the air was pure and still. As soon as the sun rose the swans flew away with Elisa from the rock.

After flying nearly all day, Elisa at last saw the



beautiful country she was going to, and before the sun had set she was sitting on a mountain before a large cave which was overgrown with delicate green creepers.

"Now we shall see what you will dream about here to-night," said the youngest brother, and he showed her the place where she was to sleep.

"Perhaps I shall dream how I may be able to save you," she said.

And she prayed to God so earnestly for help that even in her sleep she went on praying. She thought that a fairy came to her. This fairy was beautifully dressed, but she looked very much like the old woman who had given her the berries in the forest, and had told her about the swans with golden crowns.

"Your brothers can be saved," she said; "but have you courage, and can you work very hard? Do you see the nettle which I hold in my hand? A great many of this kind grow round about the cave in which you sleep; but, mark you, only those which grow there and on the graves of the churchyards can be used."

"These you must gather, although they will blister your hands. Tread the nettles with your feet and they will turn into flax. This you must twist, and then knit eleven shirts with long sleeves. Throw







these shirts over the eleven swans, and the spell will be broken. But you must remember that from the moment you begin your task till it is finished, even though it may take years, you must not speak. The first word you speak will go like a dagger to your brothers' hearts and kill them; on your silence depend their lives. Remember all this!"

And then she touched Elisa's hand with the nettle, which burned like fire and caused her to awake. It was broad daylight, and close to where she had slept lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. Then she fell on her knees and thanked God, and went out of the cave to begin her task

### III

#### ELISA'S TASK

Elisa gathered the stinging nettles. They blistered her soft hands and arms like fire, yet she was quite willing to bear it all, if she could only save her dear brothers. She trod every nettle with her bare feet and twisted the green flax from it.

When the sun had gone down her brothers came back. They grew frightened when they found her so silent, and thought it was some new witchery of their wicked stepmother; but when they saw her



hands they understood what she was doing for their sake. The youngest brother wept, and where his tears fell on her hands the pain ceased and the blisters vanished.

She worked all night, for she could not rest till she had set free her dear brothers. All of the next day she sat alone, while the swans were away, and the time had never flown so quickly. One shirt was already finished and she had begun another.

Just then a hunting horn startled Elisa. The sound came nearer and nearer; she heard the barking of dogs, and soon one of them jumped from the thicket, and then came another, and still another. In a few minutes all the huntsmen were there outside the cave, and the handsomest among them was the king of the country. He went up to Elisa, for he had never seen a more beautiful girl in his life.

“How did you come here, you lovely child?” he said. Elisa shook her head; she dared not speak, for if she did, her brothers would be lost. She hid her hands under her apron, so that the king should not see the blisters.

“Come with me,” he said; “you must not stay here. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in silks and velvet and place the golden crown upon your head and you shall live in my grandest palace.” And he lifted her on his







horse. She wept and wrung her hands, but the king said, "I think only of your happiness. One day you will thank me." And then he dashed off across the mountains holding her before him on his horse, and the huntsmen came rushing on behind.

Toward sunset the city lay before them. The king led Elisa into the palace, where fountains were playing in the marble halls, and where every room had the most beautiful furniture and pictures, but she had no mind for such things. She wept while the court ladies put lovely clothes on her and plaited pearls in her long hair.

When she came before the court, she was so beautiful that everybody bowed before her, and the king chose her for his bride; although the prime minister shook his head and whispered that she must be a witch.

But the king would not listen to the prime minister. He ordered music to strike up, the loveliest girls to dance round her, and the most costly dishes to be served. She was led through lovely gardens and beautiful halls, but not a smile could be seen on her lips or in her eyes.

The king now opened a door to a small room close to the one in which she was to sleep. Except that there was a carpet on the floor, the room was exactly like the cave in which she had been living.



On the floor lay the bundle of flax which she had spun out of the nettles, and from the ceiling hung the shirt which she had finished—all of which one of the huntsmen had brought with him.

“Here you can imagine yourself back in your cave,” said the king. “Here is the work you were busy with there; you can amuse yourself with it as much as you wish.”

When Elisa saw these things, a smile played round her mouth, and the color came to her cheeks. She thought of how she should even yet be able to free her brothers, and she kissed the king’s hand. He pressed her to his heart and ordered all the church bells to be rung for the wedding. The beautiful dumb maiden from the forest was to become queen of the land.

The prime minister then whispered wicked words into the king’s ears, but he took no heed of them.

Elisa grew to love the king more and more, but her mouth was sealed—she dared not speak. Oh, how she longed to confide in him and tell him all her sufferings! But she must remain dumb, and as dumb she must complete her task. She stole away at night, went into the little room which was fitted up like a cave, and knitted one shirt after another; but when she began the seventh she had no flax.



She knew that the nettles which she had to use grew in the churchyard; but she herself must gather them. How should she be able to get there?

She made up her mind to try; so with a heavy heart and trembling with fear she stole into the garden in the moonlight, walked through the long avenue of trees, and along the lonely streets to the churchyard. There, on one of the largest tombstones, she saw some ugly old witches sitting in a ring busy taking off their clothes as if they were going to bathe.

Elisa had to pass close by them, and they glared at her with their evil eyes, but she said her prayers, gathered the stinging nettles, and carried them home to the palace.

Only one human being had seen her, and that was the prime minister. He had been up while others slept. Now he felt sure that there was something wrong with the queen: she was a witch, and that explained why she had so much power over the king and the people.

He told the king what he had seen. A couple of bitter tears ran down his cheeks, for he began to fear that what the prime minister said was true.

That night, and for many nights after, the king followed Elisa, and day by day his brow became



darker. Elisa noticed this, but she could not understand the reason. It made her anxious, however, and her suffering became greater and greater. But she would soon finish her work; there was only one more shirt to make. Only once more would she have to go to the churchyard and gather a few handfuls of nettles.

Elisa went, but she was followed by the king and the prime minister. They saw her go through the gate of the churchyard, and when they came up to the tombstone they saw the witches sitting on it.

The king's heart was very heavy, but he said, "The people must judge her." And the people gave judgment that she was to be burnt by fire.

Elisa was led from the beautiful halls of the royal palace to a dark, damp dungeon, into which the wind whistled through the grated windows. Instead of velvets and silks, they gave her the bundle of nettles she had gathered. The hard, stinging shirts she had knitted were to serve as mattress and coverlet, but they could not have given her anything she could have prized more. She began her work again and prayed to God to help her.

Toward evening she heard the rustling of swan's wings near the window grating. It was the youngest of her brothers, who had found her. She sobbed loudly for joy, for although she knew that the



coming night might be her last, her work was almost done, and her brothers were near her.

She went on steadily with her work. The little mice ran about on the floor and dragged the nettles to her feet, and a thrush settled itself near the window grating and sang the whole night as merrily as it could, so that she should not lose courage.

The next day the people streamed out through the town gate to see the witch burned. A miserable horse drew the cart on which Elisa sat. She had been given a coarse gown to wear; her beautiful long hair hung loosely about her lovely head; her cheeks were as pale as death; her lips moved slowly, while her fingers were twisting the green flax: even on her way to death she would not give up the work she had begun. The ten shirts lay at her feet, and she was now busy knitting the eleventh, while the mob was hooting at her.

“Look at the witch, how she is mumbling to herself! There she sits with some of her witchery. Let us tear it into a thousand pieces.”

And the people rushed at her to tear the shirts to pieces, when the eleven wild swans came flying and settled down round the cart, flapping their wings. At this the crowd drew back in terror.

“It’s a sign from heaven! She must be innocent!” many whispered, but they did not say it aloud.



Suddenly Elisa threw the eleven shirts over the swans, and there stood eleven handsome princes; but the youngest had a swan's wing instead of one of his arms, because she had not been able to finish one of the sleeves of the shirt.

"Now, I may speak!" she said. "I am innocent!"

And the people, who had seen what had taken place, bowed before her as if she were a saint; but she sank fainting into her brothers' arms, overcome by the excitement and grief she had gone through.

"Yes, she is innocent," said the eldest brother; and then he told everything that had happened, and while he spoke a perfume as from a million roses filled the air, for every log in the pile where she was to have been burned had taken root and put forth branches till they formed a hedge with red roses, above which bloomed a white, bright flower that shone like a star. The king plucked this flower and placed it on Elisa's breast, and she awoke with peace and happiness in her heart.

And all the church bells began ringing of themselves, and the birds came flying into the town in great flocks. Such a wedding procession as that which returned to the palace no king had ever seen.



## THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

There were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers; they were all brothers, for they were born of the same old tin spoon. They all shouldered their muskets, they all looked straight before them, and they all had the same splendid red and blue uniform.



The first words they ever heard were, "Tin Soldiers!" This was shouted by a little boy who clapped his hands when the lid was taken off the box in which they were lying.



It was the little boy's birthday, and the soldiers had been given to him as a present. He began putting them on the table. They were all exactly alike, except one, and he had only one leg, because he had been cast last of all and there was not tin enough to fill the mould. But he stood just as firm on his one leg as the others on their two, and it was just this very soldier that became famous.

On the table where the soldiers had been placed stood many other toys, but the finest of all was a splendid castle made of cardboard. You could see right into the rooms through the small windows. In front of the castle some small trees were placed round a looking-glass which was to represent a lake. Swans made of wax swam on the lake. All this was very pretty; but the prettiest of all was a little lady who was standing outside the open gate of the castle. She, also, was made of paper; but she had a dress of the finest gauze and a little, narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders, just like a scarf, and in the middle of this ribbon was a shining tinsel rose as big as her whole face. The little lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and she lifted one leg so high that the tin soldier could not see it. So he believed that she had only one leg like himself.

"That's the wife for me," he thought; "but she is very grand. She lives in a castle, while I have only a



box, and there are five-and-twenty of us in it already. It is no place for her; but I must try to make her acquaintance."

And then he lay down at full length behind a snuff-box which was on the table. There he could easily watch the dainty little lady, who remained standing on one leg without losing her balance.

When evening came, the other tin soldiers were all placed in the box, and the people of the house went to bed. Then the toys began to have their own games. They played at "war" and at "visiting" and "giving balls." The tin soldiers rattled in their box, for they wanted to join in the fun, but they could not lift the lid. The nut-cracker turned somersaults, and the slate pencil did all sorts of tricks on the slate. There was such a noise that the canary woke up and began to chatter, and that in verse, too.

The only two who did not stir from their places were the tin soldier and the little dancer. She was standing on the tip of her toes, with both her arms stretched out; he remained quietly behind the snuff-box. He never took his eyes off her for a moment. The clock struck twelve and—bounce!—the lid flew off the snuff-box; but there was no snuff in it at all, only a little black goblin. It was a kind of a Jack-in-the-box, you know.



“Tin Soldier,” shouted the goblin, “will you keep your eyes to yourself?” But the tin soldier seemed not to hear it.

“Just you wait till to-morrow,” said the goblin.

When the children came in the next morning, they placed the tin soldier in the window. Now, whether it was the goblin who did it, or the draught, is not known, but the window flew open all of a sudden, and the soldier fell head foremost from the third story. It was a terrible fall. There he was, standing on his head, his sword sticking between two paving stones, and his leg pointing up in the air.

The servant-girl and the little boy ran down into the street at once to look for him, but although they very nearly trod upon him, they could not see him. If the soldier would only have cried out, “Here I am!” they could have found him; but he was too proud to cry for help while he wore a uniform.

It began to rain; the drops fell faster and faster till they poured down. When the rain was over, two boys came past. “Look!” cried one of them, “there’s a tin soldier. Let’s give him a sail!”

They made a boat out of a newspaper, and put the soldier in it, and soon he was sailing along the gutter, while the two boys ran beside him, clapping their hands. Dear me! how the waves rose in that gutter, and how fast the stream ran! But then



it had been a heavy rain. The paper boat rocked up and down, and sometimes turned round so fast that the tin soldier was very nearly shaken overboard; but he stuck to it manfully. Suddenly the boat shot under a bridge which formed part of a drain, and then it was dark as the tin soldier's box.

"I wonder where I am going now," he thought. "Yes, yes, that's the goblin's fault. Ah! if the little lady were only here along with me in the boat I should not mind if it were twice as dark."

Just then a large water rat who was living in the drain saw him.

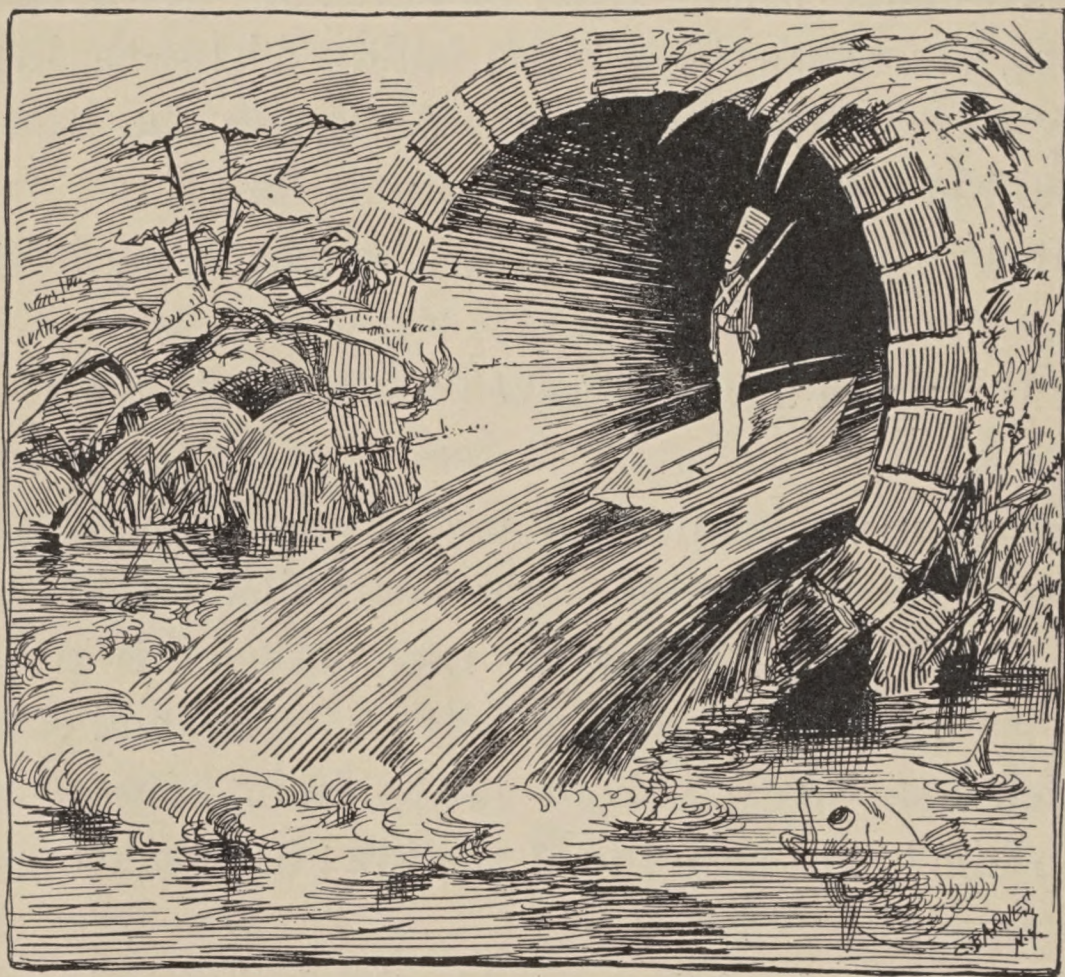
"Have you a pass?" asked the rat. "Give it to me at once."

But the tin soldier did not answer and grasped his musket still tighter. The boat sailed on and the rat followed it. How the rat gnashed his teeth! He shouted out to all the bits of wood and straw which were floating about in the drain, "Stop him! stop him! He hasn't paid the toll! he hasn't shown his pass!"

But the rush of the water in the drain carried the boat along faster and faster. The tin soldier could already see the bright daylight at the end of the drain, but he heard at the same time a roaring noise which was enough to frighten even a bold man. Only think—at the end of the drain the water rushed



out into a big canal ! And for him that was as dangerous as a big waterfall would be to us. He was too close to it to stop, so the boat rushed on, and the poor tin soldier could only hold himself as stiffly as possible, without moving an eyelid, to show that he was not afraid.



The boat whirled round three or four times, and then filled with water to the very edge ; nothing could save it from sinking. He now stood up to his neck in water, while deeper and deeper sank the boat. The water had now reached up to the soldier's



head. He thought of the beautiful little dancer, whom he should never see again. The old nursery rhyme was ringing in his ears :

“ Danger, danger! Warrior bold,  
Prepare to meet thy grave so cold ! ”

At this moment the boat went to pieces, and the tin soldier was sinking, when a great fish snapped him up and swallowed him.

What a dark place it was ! It was even darker than the drain, and there was so little room, too. But our brave tin soldier did not flinch a bit ; he lay at full length, shouldering his musket.

The fish was rushing about and struggling fearfully. At last he became quiet ; something like a flash of lightning passed through him. It was broad daylight, and somebody cried out, “ A tin soldier ! ”

The fish had been caught and brought to market, where he was sold, and had now been carried up into the kitchen, where the cook cut him open with a big knife. She took the soldier and carried him into the parlor. Everybody there was anxious to see the tin soldier who had travelled about in the inside of a fish, but the tin soldier was not at all proud.

They put him on the table, and—how many strange things happen in this world !—there he was in the very room where he fell out of the window. There were the same children, the same playthings



standing on the table, and the pretty castle with the dainty little dancer at the door. She was still standing on one leg, and kept the other high in the air.

It touched the tin soldier so much to see her that he almost wept tin tears, but he kept them back. He looked at her and she looked at him, but they did not say anything.

Then one of the little boys took the tin soldier and threw him into the fire.

The flames lighted up the tin soldier. He felt a heat that was terrible, but whether it was the heat from the fire or from his love he could not be quite sure. The colors had quite gone off him, but whether this had happened to him on his journey or was caused by his grief no one could tell. He looked at the little lady and she looked at him; he felt he was melting, but he remained firm, shouldering his musket.

Suddenly the door of the room flew open; the draft caught the dancer, and she flew straight into the stove to the tin soldier; there was a blaze—and she was gone. The brave tin soldier melted down into a little lump, and when the servant-girl took out the ashes next morning she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. Of the beautiful dancer nothing remained but the tinsel rose, and that was burned as black as a coal.



# THE NIGHTINGALE

## I

### THE NIGHTINGALE IN THE FOREST

In China, you know, the emperor is a Chinaman, and all those whom he has about him are Chinamen. The story I am going to tell you happened many years ago, but perhaps just on that account it is worth hearing. The emperor's palace was the most splendid in the world. It was made entirely of porcelain—very costly, but so delicate and brittle that one had to be careful in touching it.

In the garden were the most wonderful flowers, and to the most beautiful of them little bells were tied, so that no one should pass by without noticing the flowers. This garden was so big that the gardener himself did not know where the end was. If you kept on walking, you came to a forest with very high trees and deep lakes. The forest went down to the sea, where great ships could sail under the branches of the trees.

In this forest lived a nightingale which sang so sweetly that even the poor fisherman, who had so many other things to do, would rest on his oars and



listen when he went out at night to pull in his nets. "How beautiful it is!" he would say.

Visitors came from all parts of the world to the city of the emperor and admired it, as well as the palace and the garden; but when they heard the nightingale they said, "That is the best of all."

And when the travellers went home they talked of all they had seen, and many of them wrote books about the city and the palace and the garden, but they did not forget the nightingale, which they praised beyond everything.

These books went all over the world, and at last some of them reached the emperor.

"What's this?" said the emperor. "The nightingale! I don't know anything at all about him—I have never heard of him. To think one has to find out such things from books!"

So he called his chamberlain, who was a very grand person, and said to him, "I hear there is a very remarkable bird here, called a nightingale. They say he is the best thing in my empire. Why have I never heard anything about him? It is my wish that he shall appear here this evening and sing before me!"

"I have never heard him mentioned before," said the chamberlain; "but I shall look for him—I shall find him!"



The chamberlain ran all over the palace, asking those he met if they had heard of the nightingale. But no one had, and the chamberlain ran back to the emperor and said :

“There is no such thing as a nightingale. It is a story made up by the person who wrote the book. Your Majesty must not believe everything that is written.”

“But the book in which I have read it,” said the emperor, “has been sent me by the great and mighty Emperor of Japan, and it cannot be a falsehood ! I will hear the nightingale, and if he is not brought to me this evening, all the court shall be trampled upon after they have supped !”

So again the chamberlain ran about the palace, up and down the staircases and through the halls, but he could find no one who knew anything of the nightingale, until he came across a poor little maid in the kitchen, who said, “Oh, yes ! the nightingale ! I know him well. How he can sing ! Every evening they let me take home some leavings from the table for my poor sick mother, who lives down by the shore. When I feel tired on my way back and rest in the forest, I hear the nightingale sing. He brings tears to my eyes. It is just as if my mother kissed me !”

“My little kitchen maid,” said the chamberlain,



"I will get you a better place in the kitchen and permission to see the emperor dine, if only you can take us to the nightingale."

And so they set out for the forest, and half the court went with them. As they walked along a cow began lowing.

"Ah!" said one, "there he is! What a strong voice for such a small creature! I have certainly heard him before."

"No, that's the cow lowing!" said the kitchen maid. "We are still far from the place."

Some frogs now began croaking in a pool.

"Beautiful!" said another. "It sounds like tiny church bells!"

"No, that's the frogs," said the kitchen maid. "But I think we shall soon hear him."

Just then the nightingale began to sing.

"There he is!" said the little girl. "Listen, listen! And there he sits!" and she pointed to a little gray bird up among the branches.

"Is it possible!" said the chamberlain. "I never imagined he would look like that! How common he looks! He must have lost his color at seeing so many grand folks here."

"Little nightingale," cried the kitchen maid quite loudly, "our gracious emperor would like so much to have you sing before him."



“With the greatest pleasure,” said the nightingale, and began to sing in good earnest.

“It sounds like silver bells,” said the chamberlain. “It is very strange that we have never heard him before. He will be a great success at court.”

“Shall I sing once more before the emperor?” said the nightingale, for he thought the emperor was among the people there.

“My sweet little nightingale,” said the chamberlain, “I have great pleasure in commanding you to appear at a court festival, where you shall delight His Majesty with your charming singing.”

“It sounds best in the greenwood,” said the nightingale. But he was quite willing to go when he heard that the emperor wished it.

## II

### THE NIGHTINGALE IN THE PALACE

At the palace everything was polished and brightened up for the festival in the evening.

In the middle of the great hall, where the emperor sat, a golden perch had been fixed for the nightingale. The whole court was present, and the little kitchen maid had permission to stand behind the door. All were dressed in their best, and all were looking at the little gray bird.



And the nightingale sang so beautifully that tears came into the emperor's eyes and rolled down his cheeks. Then the nightingale sang still more beautifully; his song went straight to every one's heart, and the emperor was so happy that he said the nightingale should have his golden slipper to wear round his neck. But the nightingale thanked the emperor, and said it was reward enough to see him happy.

The nightingale now remained at court, had his own cage, and was allowed to take a walk twice a day, and once at night. There were twelve footmen to attend upon him, each of whom had a silk ribbon which was fastened to the nightingale's leg. They held these ribbons very tightly. There was no pleasure at all in that kind of an outing.

One day a parcel came for the emperor, and on the outside was written "Nightingale."

"Here we have a new book about our wonderful bird," said the emperor. But it was not a new book; it was a toy nightingale, which had been made to look exactly like the living one. It was set with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires.

As soon as the toy bird had been wound up, it began to sing one of the songs of the real bird, while the tail moved up and down, sparkling with gold and gems.



“Now the birds must sing together! What a duet it will be!”

And so the birds sang together, but they did not get on well; for the real bird had to sing in his own way, while the toy bird had to sing just as it was made to sing.

So they decided to let the toy bird sing alone. It had just as much success as the real bird, and besides it was much prettier to look at.

It sang the same piece over thirty-three times, and still the people did not get tired of it. Then the emperor thought the living nightingale ought to sing a little, too, but where was he? Nobody had noticed that he had flown out through the open window, away into the green forest.

And afterwards, because the people came to like the toy nightingale so much, the living one was banished from the land.

A whole year passed by. The emperor, the court, and all the other Chinamen knew by heart every little note in the toy nightingale's song, but just on that account they liked it best. They could now join in the song themselves, which they did; and even the emperor sang. It was delightful!

But one evening, when the toy bird was singing its best, and the emperor lay in bed listening to it, something inside the bird went “pop”; a spring had



broken, and, whir-r-r, round went all the wheels, and then the music stopped.

The emperor jumped out of bed at once and called for his physician. But how could he be of any help? Then they brought the watchmaker, and after a great deal of talking and a long and careful examination he got the bird into something like order, but he said it must not be used so much, for the wheels were worn, and it was not possible to put in new ones. It would only be safe to let the bird sing once a year.

Five years passed away, and now the country was in great sorrow, for the emperor was ill, and not expected to live.

One night, the poor emperor lay suffering in his bed, scarcely able to breathe, when suddenly the most lovely song was heard, close to the window—it was the little, living nightingale, which sat outside on a branch of a tree. The bird had heard of the emperor's illness, and had come to sing to him of life and hope.

"Thanks, thanks!" said the emperor. "You heavenly little bird, I know you well. I banished you from the land, and yet you have come to soothe me when I am ill. How can I reward you?"

"You have rewarded me," said the nightingale. "I drew tears from your eyes the first time I sang



before you; I shall never forget that! Those are the jewels that bring joy to a singer's heart. But go to sleep now, and grow well and strong. I will sing to you."

And he sang, and the emperor fell into a sweet



sleep. Ah! how mild and refreshing that sleep was! The sun was shining through the windows when he awoke, quite well again. And the nightingale still sat and sang.

"You must stay with me always," said the emperor. "You shall sing only when you please, and the toy bird I will break into a thousand pieces."



“Do not do that,” said the nightingale. “It has done what it could. Keep it as before. I cannot settle down and live in the palace. Let me come when I like. I will then sit on the branch outside the window, in the evenings, and sing to you. I will sing to you about the good and the evil round you which are kept hidden from you; for the little song-bird flies round to the poor fisherman, to the peasant’s roof—to every one—far away from you and your court. I will come; I will sing to you. But one thing you must promise me—do not tell any one that you have a little bird that tells you everything, and then all will go still better with you.”

And then the nightingale flew away.



## THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEP

Have you ever seen a really old wooden cupboard, quite black with age and covered with odd carvings? Just such a cupboard was standing in a parlor. It had been left to the family by a great-grandmother. In the middle of the cupboard door was carved the full-length figure of a man which it would make you laugh to look at. He had goat's legs, small horns on his head, and a long beard. The children always called him "Major-and-lieutenant-general-war-commander-sergeant of the Billy-goat-legs."

He was always looking toward the table under the mirror, for there stood a lovely little shepherdess of porcelain. Her shoes were gilt and her dress was fastened up with a rose, and then she had a gilt hat and shepherd's crook. She was really lovely.

Close to her stood a little chimney-sweep, black as coal, but also made of porcelain. He was quite clean and as nice as anybody. As to his being a sweep, that was of course because he had been made to be one; the workmen might just as well as not have made a prince of him.



There he stood with his ladder, looking quite handsome, with a face as red and white as a girl's. This, of course, was really a mistake, for it might as well have been a little blackened. He was standing close to the shepherdess. They had both been placed where they stood, and having been so placed, they became engaged, for they suited each other very well, as they were both young people and were made of the same porcelain.

Close to them stood another figure which was three times as big as they. It was an old Chinaman who could nod his head. He, also, was made of porcelain, and used to say that he was grandfather of the little shepherdess; but I don't think he could prove that. He would, however, insist that he had some influence over her, and that was the reason he had been nodding to Major Billy-goat-legs, who was courting the little shepherdess.

"Now there is a husband for you," said the old Chinaman. "A man who I think is actually made of mahogany. He can make you Lady Major. He has got the whole cupboard full of silver besides what he has in his secret drawers."

"I don't want to go into the dark cupboard," said the little shepherdess. "I have heard say that he has eleven porcelain wives in there!"

"Then you can be the twelfth," said the China-



man. "To-night, as soon as the old cupboard begins to creak, you two shall be married, as true as I am a Chinaman!" And then he nodded his head and fell asleep.

But the little shepherdess wept and looked at the beloved of her heart, the porcelain chimney-sweep.

"I think I must ask you," she said, "to go with me out into the wide world, for we cannot remain here."

"I will do everything you want me to do," said the little sweep. "Let us go at once. I think I shall be able to make a living."

"I wish we were safely down from the table," she said. "I shall not be happy till we are out in the wide world."

And so he comforted her and helped her down, showing her how she could place her little feet on the carved edges and down along a leg of the table, and he also made use of his ladder. But when they looked in the direction of the old cupboard, all the carved things seemed to be in a state of confusion. Major Billy-goat-legs jumped into the air and shouted across to the old Chinaman, "They are running away! they are running away!"

This frightened them, and they jumped up into the drawer of the window seat.



"I cannot bear it in here," she said. "I must get out of this drawer." But when they got down on the floor and looked up at the table, the old Chinaman had awakened and all his body was rocking to and fro.

"The old Chinaman is coming!" cried the little shepherdess, and fell down on her porcelain knees, so great was her distress.

"I have an idea," said the sweep. "Let us creep into the great rose jar which stands in the corner; there we can lie on roses and lavender and throw salt into the old Chinaman's eyes when he comes."

"That will not do," she said. "Besides, I know that he and the rose jar were once engaged. No, there is no help for it; we must go out into the wide world!"

"Have you really courage to go with me out into the wide world?" asked the sweep. "Have you thought about how big it is, and that we could never come back here again?"

"Yes, I have," she said.

Then the sweep said, "We can go through the chimney. After we get there I know my way well. We shall climb up so high that they cannot reach us, and at the top there is a hole leading out to the wide world."

And he led her to the door of the stove.



"It looks dark in there," she said. But she went with him for all that, though it was pitch dark.

"Now we are in the chimney," he said. "See! Look at the beautiful star that is shining just above us!"

And it was a real star in the sky which shone down upon them, as if it wanted to show them the way. They crawled and crept on, and a dreadful way it was, so high, so very high. But he lifted her and supported her. He held her and showed her the best places where she could put her little porcelain feet. At last they reached the top of the chimney, where they sat down, for they were really tired, and no wonder.

The sky with all its stars was above their heads, and below them lay all the roofs of the city. They could see far around them, far out into the wide world. The poor shepherdess had never thought it was anything like this. She leaned her little head against her chimney-sweep, and cried till the gilding was washed off her girdle.

"Oh, this is too much for me!" she said. "I cannot bear it. The world is too big. I wish I were back again on the little table under the mirror. You may as well go back with me if you care at all for me."

The sweep tried to reason with her. He spoke



of the old Chinaman and Major Billy-goat-legs, but she sobbed so bitterly that he could not do anything but humor her.

And so with a great deal of trouble they crawled down the chimney again. They crept through the pipe, which was anything but pleasant, and at last they stood inside the dark stove. They stopped behind the door to listen to what was going on in the room. They peeped out—alas! there, in the middle of the floor, lay the old Chinaman.

He had fallen down from the table when he tried to run after them, and lay there broken into three pieces. The whole of his back had come off in one piece, and the head had rolled over into a corner. Major Billy-goat-legs stood where he had always stood, and seemed to be buried in thought.

“It is terrible!” said the little shepherdess. “My old grandfather is broken to pieces, and it is all our fault! I shall never get over it.” And then she wrung her tiny little hands.

“He can be mended,” said the sweep. “Now do take things quietly. If they cement his back and put a strong rivet in his neck, he will be as good as new, and be able to say a great many unpleasant things to us yet.”

“Do you think so?” she said. And they climbed up again on to the table where they had stood before.



“Well, this is as far as we have got,” said the chimney-sweep. “We might as well have saved ourselves all the trouble.”

“If only old grandfather were mended!” said the shepherdess.

And he was mended. The people in the house had his back cemented, and a strong rivet was put in his neck. He was as good as new, except that he could no longer nod.

“You seem to have become rather proud since you were broken,” said Major Billy-goat-legs; “but I don’t think it is anything to be proud of. Shall I have her, or shall I not?”

And the chimney-sweep and the shepherdess were dreadfully afraid that the old Chinaman would nod “Yes.” But he could not, on account of the rivet in his neck.

So the little porcelain people were left to themselves, and they blessed the rivet in grandfather’s neck, and loved each other till they broke to pieces.



## LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS

"My poor flowers are quite dead," said little Ida. "They were so beautiful last night, and now all the leaves are withered! Why do they do that?" she asked the student, who was visiting the family.

Ida was very fond of him, for he could tell the most beautiful stories and do the most amusing things.

"Don't you know what is the matter with them?" said the student. "The flowers were at a ball last night and to-day they are tired. That's why they hang their heads."

"But flowers cannot dance," said little Ida.

"Oh, yes," said the student. "When it is dark and we are asleep they run about quite merrily. They have a ball almost every night."

"Where do the prettiest flowers dance?" asked little Ida.

"Haven't you often been outside the town gate to the great palace, where the king lives in summer, and where there is a garden full of lovely flowers? They hold real balls out there."

"I was there in the garden yesterday with my mother," said Ida. "But all the leaves had fallen off the trees and there were no flowers at all! Where are they? In the summer I saw so many!"



"They are in the palace," said the student. "You must know that as soon as ever the king and his court move into the town the flowers at once run away from the garden up to the palace and make merry. You ought to see that. The two most beautiful roses take a seat on the throne, and then they are king and queen. All the red cockscombs range themselves by their side and stand bowing. They are the chamberlains. Then all sorts of lovely flowers arrive and they have a great ball. The blue violets are the naval cadets and dance with hyacinths and crocuses, who are young ladies. The tulips and the large tiger-lilies are the old ladies. They watch the dancing and see that everything is nicely done."

"But," said little Ida, "doesn't any one do anything to the flowers for dancing in the king's palace?"

"No one really knows anything about it," said the student. "Sometimes the old keeper who looks after the palace comes round at night; but he has a large bunch of keys, and as soon as the flowers hear the rattling of the keys they stand quite still, or hide themselves behind the long curtains and peep out."

"Then the old steward says, 'I can smell flowers in here.' But he can't see them."



"That's great fun," said little Ida, clapping her hands. "Can the flowers in the Botanical Gardens also go there? Can they go such a long way?"

"Yes, of course," said the student, "for they can fly if they like. Haven't you seen the beautiful red and yellow butterflies that look so much like flowers? That is what they once were. They have flown from their stalks right up into the air, flapping their leaves as if they were little wings. It may be, however, that the flowers in the Botanical Gardens have never been to the king's palace, and do not know anything about the merry times out there."

"You know the professor who lives next door, don't you? Well, next time you go into his garden whisper to one of the flowers that there is going to be a ball at the palace this evening, and he will tell it to the others, and they will all fly off. When the professor comes into the garden there will not be a single flower left, and he will not be able to make out what has become of them."

"But how can one flower tell it to the others? Flowers cannot talk!"

"That's true," answered the student, "but they can make signs. Have you never noticed that when the wind blows a little the flowers nod to each other and move all their green leaves? They understand it as plainly as if they spoke."



“Can the professor understand their language?” asked Ida.

“Yes, of course! He came down into his garden one morning and saw a big nettle making signs with its leaves to a beautiful red carnation. It was saying, ‘You are so beautiful, and I love you with all my heart!’ The professor does not like such things, so he rapped the nettle on its leaves, for they are its fingers, you know; but it stung him, and since then he never dares touch a nettle.

“How funny,” said little Ida.

Little Ida thought a great deal about what the student had said. She was sure now that the flowers hung their heads because they were tired. So she carried them with her to a nice little table where she kept her toys, and where there was a whole drawer full of pretty things.

Her doll, Sophie, lay asleep in her little bed, but Ida said to her, “You really must get up, Sophie, and be content with lying in the drawer to-night. The poor flowers are tired, and they must lie in your bed.” And so she took up the doll, who looked very cross, though she did not say a single word, because she was angry at being taken out of her bed.

Little Ida put the flowers in the doll's bed, pulled the little quilt over them, and said they must lie quiet and she would make tea for them. Then she



drew the curtains close round the little bed, so that the sun should not shine in their eyes.

The whole evening Ida kept thinking about the flowers, and when she had to go to bed herself she ran to the window where her mother's tulips and hyacinths stood.

She whispered quite softly to them, "I know you are going to a ball to-night." But the flowers pretended not to understand and never stirred a leaf. Still little Ida knew what she knew!

When she was in bed she lay for a long time thinking how nice it would be to see the flower-dance in the king's palace, and she said to herself, "I wonder if my flowers have really been there!" Then she fell asleep.

In the night little Ida awoke. She had been dreaming of the flowers. It was very quiet in the bedroom where she was lying. The night-lamp was burning on the table, and her father and mother were asleep.

"I wonder if my flowers are still lying in Sophie's bed," she said to herself. "How I should like to know!" She raised herself a little, and looked toward the door, which stood half open. She listened, and it seemed to her that she heard some one playing upon the piano, but quite softly and more sweetly than she had ever heard it before.



“Now all the flowers must be dancing,” thought she. “Oh, how I should like to see them!” But she was afraid to get up, for fear of waking her father and mother. “If they would only come in here!” she said. But the flowers did not come, and the music kept on playing so beautifully that she could not stay in bed any longer. So she crept out of her little bed, stole softly to the door, and looked into the room, and, oh dear! what a pretty sight she saw!

There was no night-lamp in the room, but still it was quite light. The moon shone through the window into the middle of the room. It was almost as bright as day. The hyacinths and tulips were standing in two long rows along the floor. Not one was left on the window where the empty flower-pots stood.

On the floor the flowers were dancing gracefully, holding each other by their green leaves as they swung round and round.

No one noticed little Ida. Then she saw a large blue crocus jump right on to the middle of the table where the toys were standing, and walk straight up to the doll's bed, and pull aside the curtains. There lay the withered flowers, but they got up at once and nodded their heads to the others, to show that they also wanted to dance. They did not appear at all withered now.

Just then there was a loud knocking inside the



drawer where Sophie, Ida's doll, lay with many other toys. She put out her head, and asked in great surprise, "Is there a ball here? Why has no one told me about it?"

She sat down on the drawer, and thought that some of the flowers would be sure to come and ask her to dance. But as they did not come, she let herself fall upon the floor so as to make a great noise. Then all the flowers came running up to



her, and asked if she had hurt herself. They were all very polite, especially those that had been in her bed.



But she had not hurt herself at all; and all Ida's flowers thanked her for her nice bed, and said they loved her very much. They led her into the middle of the floor, where the moon was shining, and danced with her, while the other flowers formed a circle round them. Sophie was now very much pleased, and said they might keep her bed; she did not at all mind lying in the drawer.

But the flowers said, "We are very much obliged to you, but we cannot live very long. To-morrow we shall be dead. But tell little Ida she must bury us in the garden where the canary bird is lying. Then we shall grow up again next summer and be prettier than ever."

"No, you must not die!" said Sophie, and then she kissed the flowers.

At that moment the door of the room flew open, and many beautiful flowers came dancing in. Ida could not make out where they came from. She thought that they must be the flowers from the king's palace. First of all came two lovely roses, with their little golden crowns. They were the king and the queen. Then came stocks and carnations, bowing on all sides. They had brought music with them. Large poppies and peonies were blowing pea-shells till they were quite red in the face. The little blue-bells and the little white snowdrops



jingled merry bells. That was wonderful music! Then there came the violets and the primroses, the daisies and the lilies-of-the-valley, and many other flowers. They all danced, and all the flowers kissed one another. It was such a pretty sight!

At last the flowers said good-night to one another, and little Ida stole back to her bed, where she dreamed of all that she had seen.

When she got up next morning, she went at once to the little table to see if the flowers were still there. She pulled aside the curtains of the little bed, and there they all lay. But they were quite faded; more so than they were the day before. Sophie lay in the drawer where she had been put. She looked very sleepy.

"Can you remember what you were to tell me?" said little Ida; but Sophie only looked stupid and did not say a word.

"You are not at all kind," said Ida, "and yet they all danced with you." So she took a little paste-board box on which were painted beautiful birds. She opened it and put the dead flowers into it.

"That will make a pretty casket for you," she said, "and when my cousins come, they shall help me to bury you in the garden, so that you can grow up next summer and be prettier than ever!"

Ida's cousins were two boys whose names were



Gustave and Adolph. Their father had given them each a new crossbow, and when they came they brought these with them to show Ida. She told them about the poor flowers that were dead, and the boys helped her to bury them. Both the boys went first with their crossbows on their shoulders, and little Ida followed behind with the dead flowers in the box. A little grave was dug in the garden ; Ida first kissed the flowers, and then laid them in the grave, while Gustave and Adolph shot their crossbows over it, for they had neither guns nor cannons.



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